Security Council

Fifty-third Year

Provisional

3875th Meeting

Friday, 24 April 1998, 3 p.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Owada	(Japan)
Members:	Bahrain	Mr. Buallay
	Brazil	Mr. Amorim
	China	Mr. Shen Guofang
	Costa Rica	Mr. Berrocal Soto
	France	Mr. Dejammet
	Gabon	Mr. Dangue Réwaka
	Gambia	Mr. Sallah
	Kenya	Mr. Mahugu
	Portugal	Mr. Monteiro
	Russian Federation	Mr. Lavrov
	Slovenia	Mr. Türk
	Sweden	Mr. Dahlgren
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir John Weston
	United States of America	Mr. Richardson

Agenda

The situation in Africa

Report of the Secretary-General (S/1998/318)

98-85278 (E)

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The meeting resumed at 3.10 p.m.

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter from the representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in which he requests to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite that representative to participate in the discussion, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Mwamba Kapanga (Democratic Republic of the Congo) took a seat at the side of the Council table.

Mr. Richardson (United States of America): Today the Security Council is discussing one of the most important issues we face, the future of Africa. The Secretary-General laid a solid foundation for this discussion with his frank and incisive report, "The causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa".

Seven months ago, the Security Council, then under the presidency of the United States, asked the Secretary-General to analyse the causes of conflict in Africa and to identify ways the international community could work in partnership with Africa to prevent, mitigate and resolve conflicts. The Secretary-General responded to this difficult challenge with great courage and vision.

The Secretary-General's report provides valuable insights into the varied situations confronting Africa today. While the report recognizes the historical failures of African countries and the international community to prevent or resolve conflicts, it urges us to move beyond the recriminations of the past and focus on the possibilities of a brighter future for all Africans. The Secretary-General's recommendations serve as useful frameworks for action towards that goal.

The United States has taken the Secretary-General's message to heart. We are committed to an active partnership with Africa to promote democracy, respect for human rights and sustained stability and to accelerate Africa's integration into the global economy.

Only three weeks ago, President Clinton returned from an historic 11-day, 6-nation tour of Africa. As the Secretary-General did in his report, President Clinton stressed the central importance of democracy and basic freedoms. This was the vision that brought President Clinton and seven leaders from Central and East Africa together to sign the Entebbe Accord. The Accord endorsed the core principles of inclusion, the rule of law, respect for human rights, the equality of all men and women and the right of citizens to regularly elect their leaders freely and to participate fully in the decision-making which affects them. The eight leaders recognized that meeting these objectives requires the political will to resolve conflicts without violence, achieve sustainable economic development and prevent the tragedy of genocide from ever recurring in Africa.

Regional and subregional African organizations have shown the political will to play a leading role in ending conflict and thereby enhancing stability and prosperity in Africa. Over the past several years the United States has contributed over $10 million to assist the Organization of African Unity to build a crisis management centre in Addis Ababa and to train and equip a 100-man rapid deployment observation force. We have worked with regional organizations in West Africa, southern Africa and East Africa to support African-led efforts to end conflicts. Our African Crisis Response Initiative and similar efforts by France and the United Kingdom are designed to help African nations enhance their ability to serve as peacekeepers in Africa or in other troubled regions. Coordination and cross-training are keys to the success of peacekeeping operations. We urge the international community to continue helping the regional and subregional organizations develop their conflict management and peacekeeping capacities.

As the Secretary-General's report notes, only when peace and security are established can sustainable economic development take root. As the benefits of economic opportunity spread, the prospects for a sustained and lasting peace correspondingly improve. The all too familiar cycle of violence can and must be replaced by a cycle of opportunity.

President Clinton emphasized the need to broaden economic opportunities for Africans. Africa does not need or want the world's sympathy; it needs foreign investment, new trade and commercial links and the increased tax revenue and improved infrastructure that come with economic growth. The United States is implementing the Partnership for Growth and Opportunity

and working with Congress to pass the African Growth and Opportunity Act, which will open our markets to African countries undertaking economic reforms. In addition, we are working with leading reform-oriented countries to consider additional measures to expand trade and investment relations between Africa and the United States.

At the same time, President Clinton pledged to work with Congress to restore levels of official development assistance to Africa to their historical high-water mark. The United States believes that there is no sounder investment than in the well-being and future of people, and we are making that investment in Africa. We are helping to control the spread of diseases such as HIV/AIDS and malaria in Botswana. In Uganda, we launched the Education for Development and Democracy Initiative, which will improve the quality of African education at all levels, but give special attention to educational opportunities for young women and greater access to the technology and information needed to compete in the next century.

One of the burdens Africans should not have to carry far into the next century is the burden of debt. We, along with other donors, recognize the importance of reducing to sustainable levels the debts of countries that are taking the often painful and difficult steps necessary to reform and modernize their economies. By the year 2000, the United States will have provided some $3 billion in debt reduction for African countries. Under a new bilateral initiative for Africa, the United States hopes to fully forgive concessional debts owed by African countries that demonstrate the political will to undertake sustained reforms.

Just as President Clinton's trip launched a critical reassessment of the United States' relationship with Africa, the Secretary-General's report should establish the framework for a new dialogue between the international community and Africa and spur us all to action.

Today's meeting of the Security Council represents only the first step in that discussion. We must not walk away from today's meeting, pat ourselves on the back and think that our work is done. We look forward to collaborating with other countries, in the Security Council and in other United Nations bodies, to study and then implement the recommendations of the Secretary-General. We strongly endorse the Secretary-General's call for ministerial-level meetings of the Security Council every two years to assess how we are doing and how we can do more.

We must now meet the challenge the Secretary-General has put before us: to begin a new partnership among Africa, the United Nations and the international community. Together we can contribute to Africa's effort to realize its potential and its dream of peace, stability and development. Together, as an international community, we must reach out to support the next generation of Africans as they work to create a new, more dynamic and hopeful Africa.

The President: The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Mauritania. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Ould Deddach (Mauritania) (*interpretation from French*): Allow me first of all to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month. Knowing your skills and qualities and the interest that your country has in African issues, I am sure that you will guide our work to a positive outcome.

I should also like to take this opportunity to extend, on behalf of the African Group, my congratulations and encouragement to the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, for his report, entitled "The causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa".

On 25 September 1997 the Security Council, meeting at ministerial level, unanimously acknowledged the need to engage in concerted international action to achieve peace, security and development in Africa.

In its presidential statement (S/PRST/1997/46), the Security Council indicated that it remained seriously concerned by the number and intensity of armed conflicts on the African continent. Believing that the challenges facing Africa required a more comprehensive response, the Council then requested the Secretary-General to present to it a report

> "containing concrete recommendations ... regarding the sources of conflict in Africa, ways to prevent and address these conflicts, and how to lay the foundation for durable peace and economic growth".

At the same time, the Council affirmed its intention to review promptly the recommendations of the Secretary-General with a view to taking steps consistent

with its responsibilities under the Charter of the United Nations.

All of the speakers at that ministerial-level meeting, and in particular the current Chairman of the Organization of African Unity, His Excellency President Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe, as well as the Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity, His Excellency Mr. Salim Ahmed Salim, put forward the concerns of Africa with regard to security, peace and development.

The report that the Secretary-General was asked to draw up has now appeared, and was presented to the Council last week.

This substantive document, 22 pages and 107 paragraphs in length, is sound in every way. It covers all relevant aspects of the security, peace and development of our continent.

Indeed, the sources of these conflicts are varied and manifold, but they all have a single common denominator: underdevelopment and economic problems in general. For example, of the planet's 48 least developed countries, 35 are in Africa.

The Secretary-General's report clearly emphasizes this aspect of the situation. While the notable decline of conflicts in Africa must be welcomed, the persistent consequences of conflicts in several regions of the continent must nevertheless be acknowledged, consequences that can threaten peace and security and that significantly endanger the efforts of the African States to achieve development and ensure the well-being of their populations.

The Organization of African Unity (OAU) has done significant work in the areas of conflict prevention, management and settlement, in particular by creating an organ entrusted with such action and by undertaking numerous initiatives to restore and consolidate peace in certain regions of Africa.

Africa is aware that it holds the primary responsibility for solving the problems that face it; it must demonstrate to the international community its will to face these challenges, but it also needs the international community's aid and support. The Group of African States would like to take this opportunity to welcome the recent establishment of a United Nations liaison office at OAU headquarters, which will further ensure close cooperation between the two organizations in the prevention and resolution of conflicts in Africa and in other areas of mutual interest.

The annual meetings between the Secretaries-General of the United Nations and OAU also promote better communication and planning in order to achieve more satisfactory results. Cooperation with all African subregional organizations should also be encouraged.

In his report, the Secretary-General requests the international community as a whole act to deal with the situations in Africa. The Security Council, within the area of competence conferred on it by the Charter, must immediately set about implementing the report's recommendations.

Other measures and actions recommended in Mr. Kofi Annan's report fall within the purview of the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Bretton Woods institutions. All of these institutions should immediately scrutinize the report in order to see to what extent the actions that are within their competence should be implemented.

Cooperation and collaboration between the African countries and the United Nations are necessary to achieve concrete results. Synergy between the various bodies of the United Nations, on the one hand, and their partners for development in Africa, on the other, is also required.

The establishment of a mechanism or a committee mandated to implement the recommendations contained in the Secretary-General's report would facilitate the work of the Security Council.

The States of Africa are undertaking significant reforms, and it must be acknowledged that these reforms are beginning to yield positive results. However, those States are aware that a great deal remains to be done. The international community must pay greater attention to the concerns of the continent, for at a time of globalization and at the dawn of the twenty-first century, it is unjust that some inhabitants of the planet do not even have the bare minimum they need.

The best response the Security Council can give to the concerns of our continent today is the adoption of a resolution to give greater force to the actions to be undertaken and to send a clear message to the entire international community regarding the settlement of conflicts in Africa, as a way to ensure its harmonious development.

Africa is in favour of the Secretary-General's request for a biennial meeting of the Security Council at the ministerial level to take stock of the efforts made and the measures to be taken, and also supports the idea of a summit meeting of the Security Council within five years.

My country, the Islamic Republic of Mauritania, like all the African countries, welcomes any initiative undertaken to help the continent extricate itself from situations that compromise its future and that of future generations of Africans.

My country's mission is to participate actively in an organization that, respecting cultural diversity, advocates cooperation and fruitful dialogue that serve the cause of maintaining peace and stability for all.

Africa firmly believes that the report of the Secretary-General will assist the international community in better dealing with the problems it faces and that new initiatives will be taken in order to help Africa overcome them.

In that context, for our Group, the only valid response is that of undertaking specific measures to implement the report's recommendations, since it is on that implementation, as well as on the will of the continent's inhabitants, that the security, stability and development of Africa ultimately depend.

The President: I thank the representative of Mauritania for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Nigeria. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Gambari (Nigeria): It is my honour and privilege to make the following statement on behalf of the member States of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

Please allow me at the outset to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month. Having known you over the years, and in view of your country's particular interest in, and concrete contributions regarding the objectives of, today's agenda item, I am confident that you will successfully conduct this and subsequent deliberations of the Council in a manner that will enhance the principles and purposes of the United Nations Charter.

Permit me also to express the appreciation of the ECOWAS Group of Ambassadors at the United Nations for the convening of this important and very timely meeting of the Security Council. The initiative on the part of the members of the Council to focus attention on the need for a renewed and concerted international effort to promote peace and stability in Africa is clearly unprecedented and deserves our commendation. At a time when several African countries are making considerable economic and social progress, what is required from the international community is encouragement and support in order to sustain the positive tendencies while minimizing or eliminating the incidence of violent conflicts there.

Africa has the largest number of member countries at the United Nations, but it is also the continent with the largest number of intra-State conflicts on the agenda of the Security Council. The Secretary-General has now placed before our Organization a report which could indeed point the way in helping us all to address the terrible problem of violent conflicts in Africa. It merits serious and careful consideration. However, there is no real shortage of insightful analyses of the African condition including, in particular, this report by the Secretary-General. But there has unfortunately been a shortage of concrete actions to ameliorate the socio-economic situation and establish a regime of sustainable development in our continent. As the Secretary-General himself points out,

> "it is in deeds rather than in declarations that the international community's commitment to Africa will be measured". [*S/1998/318, para. 106*]

The key causes of conflict in Africa, as listed in the Secretary-General's report, are varied and complex. Some are internal and some external. In addition to its heavy external debt overhang, youth unemployment and poor and often inadequate infrastructure, Africa is threatened by serious social instability and conflicts resulting in great loss of life and alarming numbers of refugees and displaced persons, the most vulnerable of whom are women and children. This aspect of the situation is fully highlighted in the report before us today, and its dire consequences have continued to compromise Africa's efforts to ensure long-term stability, prosperity and peace for its peoples.

At the beginning of the 1980s, sub-Saharan Africa entered a period of serious economic decline, during which real income per capita fell. This continued until 1993. Investment and saving rates likewise declined

during this period. The debt burden became unsustainable, with Africa's external debt estimated at a total of $328.9 billion in 1995.

However, beginning in 1994, three successive years of improved economic performance have provided grounds for cautious optimism. For the first time since the beginning of the 1980s, gross domestic product growth rates stood at slightly over 4 per cent, thereby exceeding population growth, although by a fairly small margin. This recent upturn in sub-Saharan Africa, as was highlighted in the Secretary-General's report, was underpinned by the continued and rigorous implementation of economic reform programmes, as well as by reductions in socio-economic and political instability. A major factor was growth in exports, which, according to the Economic Commission for Africa, went from minus 4.2 per cent in 1993 to 3.3 per cent in 1994 and 16.2 per cent 1995.

There is therefore the urgent need for additional and more positive action on the debt burden of African States by the international community to promote and reinforce these gains from economic reforms. The recent Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Debt Initiative is, no doubt, a welcome step, even though its results so far have not been encouraging. It should be expanded to include other highly indebted countries in the continent, as only four countries now qualify for this Initiative.

The ECOWAS group believes that the sustenance of the recent economic upturn in sub-Saharan Africa depends on a number of factors, in particular on how successfully gains from increased export earnings are applied to strengthen potential growth. A programme of sustained economic growth should aim at significant investment in infrastructure which, in many cases, is run down after years of neglect. There is therefore the pressing need for foreign direct investment in our economies which could enhance the process of diversification beyond traditional exports, which is essential for sustained growth.

Since the late 1980s, foreign direct investment has become an important new and vital instrument for the integration of countries into the global economy. Unfortunately, sub-Saharan African countries have not been part of this trend, in spite of the fact that countries of the region undertook many efforts to attract foreign direct investment, for example, by liberalizing their markets and increasing investor confidence through the conclusion of bilateral investment promotion and protection agreements and avoidance of double-taxation situations.

ECOWAS countries strongly believe that Africa is a continent in which profitable investment opportunities abound and that corporate and individual investors should consider African countries as places to invest as we enter the third millennium. However, the much-needed flows of investment capital will also depend on the effectiveness of measures taken by the international community to alleviate the external debt burden of heavily indebted countries — to which I referred earlier — which in sub-Saharan Africa consists mainly of public and public-guaranteed long-term debt. A satisfactory resolution of the external debt burden is necessary if Africa is to be successfully integrated into the world economy. In addition, debt relief would also free resources needed for government investment in physical and social infrastructures.

On the maintenance of regional peace and security, the ECOWAS group is unanimous in its commitment to the collective security of the entire subregion. This is manifested through the creation of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) in August 1990, which has succeeded in containing the Liberian civil war and restoring peace to that country so that, in July 1997, it was possible to have the election of Charles Taylor as President of Liberia. The same ECOMOG was a crucial instrument in the efforts which led to the restoration of President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah as President of Sierra Leone following the routing of the military junta that had earlier taken power in Sierra Leone, in May 1997. This is the first time in the recent history of Africa that a democratically elected regime, overthrown in a military *coup*, was restored to power as a result of collective action in a subregion. This is a rare achievement for which we in the subregion are proud.

With this record of achievement, ECOWAS has an effective mechanism for peace and conflict resolution which has proven itself. That is probably why at the meeting of the Ministers of Defence and Foreign Affairs of ECOWAS member States last March, experts from member States were directed to work with the ECOWAS Executive Secretariat to elaborate a mechanism for conflict prevention, conflict management and conflict resolution, as well as for peacekeeping, in pursuance of the decisions of the fourth extraordinary session of the ECOWAS Authority of Heads of State and Government held in Lomé, Togo, in December of last year. In order to prevent, manage and resolve conflicts and to maintain peace in the subregion, the Ministers agreed to abide by the provisions of the Protocol on Non-Aggression and the

Protocol on Mutual Assistance in Defence and to draw on the experiences acquired in the field, notably by ECOMOG, in the preparation of a mechanism for peacekeeping.

At this juncture, the ECOWAS group wishes to draw the Council's attention to the Malian initiative on a moratorium in the production, illegal transfer and trafficking in small arms in zones of conflict, an issue discussed in the Secretary-General's report. This initiative was recently endorsed by all ECOWAS member States within the framework of ongoing discussions for the establishment of a mechanism for the prevention, management and settlement of conflicts in our subregion. This important initiative deserves the support of the international community.

The ECOWAS group would further wish to appeal to the international community to support Africa's regional and subregional initiatives such as the ECOMOG mechanism and the OAU trust fund for conflict prevention and peacekeeping. In doing so the international community will rightly be complementing African efforts to resolve African problems, as regional and subregional organizations are perhaps more familiar with the complexities of local situations.

We believe that the Bretton Woods institutions have a key role to play in the promotion, as well as in the consolidation, of peace in Africa. In this regard, these institutions should develop what we call domestic "peace-friendly" structural adjustment programmes which do not undermine the ability of African Governments to fulfil their basic responsibilities in such basic and critical areas as the education, health and welfare of their peoples.

Moreover, even when a violent conflict has been resolved, we all know that real peace still has to be established in the form of post-conflict peace-building. This essentially has to do with the provision of security and basic social facilities to ordinary people. This is also the key to preventing the recurrence of armed confrontation and avoiding a vicious cycle of violence. The Secretary-General's report clearly articulates the need for the United Nations to put in place peace-building initiatives in order to achieve sustainable peace, and we support this imperative.

Finally, the Secretary-General's report is, in our view, bold in concept, but his recommendations are also practical and, therefore, achievable — provided that all actors both inside and outside of Africa honestly and consistently commit themselves to the aims and objectives of the report. Our Secretary-General is right in pointing out that

> "conflict in Africa has been seen as inevitable or intractable ... it is neither. Conflict in Africa, as everywhere, is caused by human action and can be ended by human action." [*S/PV.3871, p. 2*]

Together, by mustering the political will to act on this report and its recommendations, we can all leave a positive legacy of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa. In this regard, we need a United Nations-led international economic and financial plan for Africa, as we once had a Marshall Plan for the recovery of Europe in the post-war era.

In closing, I wish to cite the wise words of a former Secretary-General of this Organization, the late Dag Hammarskjöld, who warned that no one can expect to keep his garden tidy by reserving a portion of it for weeds. The international community and economic system cannot long endure and function as a system if the African component is allowed to remain in a permanent state of economic depression, pervasive poverty and social decay.

The President: I thank the representative of Nigeria for the kind words he addressed to me.

Before I call on the next speaker inscribed on my list, I should like to make a very brief announcement.

Members of the Council will recall that the Secretary-General made his best efforts to sit through the morning session of this meeting. He came again to sit in on part of this afternoon's session, but unfortunately he has left, leaving the message that he had another pressing engagement this afternoon. I would like to take this opportunity to express gratitude on my part, as President of the Security Council, for his strong interest in attending this meeting.

The Secretary-General asked me to say that the Deputy Secretary-General, Mrs. Fréchette, is going to replace him in his chair and I am given to understand that this is the first time in history that someone other than the Secretary-General has sat there. I would like to welcome the Deputy Secretary-General.

The next speaker is the representative of South Africa. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Jele (South Africa): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the member States of the Southern African Development Community (SADC): Angola, Botswana, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Seychelles, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

We in SADC commend the Secretary-General for his report, whose holistic approach to the sources of conflict in Africa has been dealt with in a balanced manner. It is particularly important that the report provides guidelines on conflict prevention, management and resolution.

It is imperative that the United Nations strengthen its capacity in the area of peacekeeping in Africa so as to respond to conflicts in a way that inspires confidence in its universal obligation as the custodian of international peace and security. Conflict prevention is vital and should be accorded the highest priority and, where conflict has erupted, timeous and effective management is crucial.

SADC welcomes the Secretary-General's objective to redouble efforts to institutionalize peace where conflict has ceased or where the prospects for peace are increased. The political will of Member States is therefore pivotal in this process and, in that context, it is important to stress the need for dialogue and national reconciliation.

Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter makes provision for regional arrangements to ensure the maintenance of international peace and security. It further stipulates that such arrangements should be consistent with the purposes and principles of the Charter. This provision of the Charter provides a framework for developing closer cooperation between Africa and the United Nations in peace missions. Therefore, there is a need to reinforce and implement the existing measures in a manner that promotes meaningful interaction between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity (OAU).

We share the Secretary-General's concern about the proliferation of arms and endorse his proposals for strengthening the international and domestic instruments for the harmonization of policies against illicit arms trafficking, as this would serve to promote stability. There is an urgent need to divert the expenditure of scarce resources from military to development projects.

As the integration of credible deterrent capacities, the provision of sufficient resources and the mustering of commensurate political will are imperatives for successful peacekeeping, it is essential that external actors maintain common and coherent political approaches towards incipient or ongoing conflicts and desist from engaging in rival or competing efforts once a framework for mediation has been established.

With regard to sanctions, we concur that they are among the most important tools in peacemaking efforts, but would emphasize that they should be imposed in accordance with annex II of resolution 51/242, which underlines the need for sanctions to be resorted to only with utmost caution in order to minimize their adverse effects on the civilian population.

The enhancement of Africa's capacity to operate in peace missions has been a subject of much debate. Sadly, international resources provided are commensurate neither with specific needs nor with the proposed support for capacity-building. The current processes required by donor countries to access financing for training exercises are laborious and often not responsive to the urgency with which Africa is expected to increase its capacity. We therefore fully support the Secretary-General's call on Member States to contribute generously to the OAU Peace Fund. Once the proper criteria have been established for endorsing peace missions and needs assessments have been made regarding those aspects of Africa's capacity which require strengthening, it would be easier to determine the applicability and depth of regional and subregional needs.

We are also encouraged by the practical recommendations regarding refugee assistance, the enhancement of the professionalism of public officials and the creation of a positive environment for investment and economic growth. The proposals to secure a more dynamic engagement between business leaders, the United Nations, the Organization of African Unity and subregional entities are most appropriate. These interactions should greatly facilitate an understanding of the debilitating effect of Africa's problems.

There is a need for the international community to nurture and advance Africa's renaissance by recognizing the continent as the principal development challenge through effective and well-targeted strategies for development. We would like to underline the principle that respect for human rights should be linked to the broader context of peace, democracy, good governance

and development. Respect for these fundamentals would assist in obviating the instability and violence which have, sadly, beset parts of our continent and led to large-scale population movements and the associated misery, transcending borders.

Central to Africa's renaissance is the economic regeneration of the continent through economic reform, so vital in attracting foreign direct investment. However, one of the major obstacles to African development is the inability to address the debt problem generally and its servicing in all respects. The problem of the unsustainable debt burden has vexed African development practitioners for a very long time. Despite bilateral and multilateral approaches to resolve it, its cumulative impact persists. We call on the international community to explore and implement more vigorous and effective methods for a lasting solution to this problem. It is also of cardinal importance to Africa's sustainable development that the developed countries rethink and reverse the decline in levels of official development assistance to make it more effective and capable of delivery.

We in Africa are determined to demonstrate to the world that we are prepared to tackle our own problems. We trust, therefore, that this determination will serve as an encouragement to the international community to invest in Africa's renaissance. SADC is committed to the eradication of the causes of conflict in Africa to ensure sustainable development.

The President: The next speaker is the representative of the United Kingdom, to whom I give the floor.

Sir John Weston (United Kingdom): I have the honour to make the following statement on behalf of the European Union. The Central and Eastern European countries associated with the European Union, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania and Slovakia and the Associated country Cyprus, as well as the European Free Trade Association countries members of the European Economic Area, Iceland and Liechtenstein, align themselves with this statement.

The European Union warmly welcomes the publication of this report. The European Union applauds the Secretary-General for this authoritative and wide-ranging document, which brings together many ideas and approaches as a comprehensive policy and at a particularly opportune time. The Secretary-General has provided a clear and candid analysis of the sources of conflict in Africa and the reasons why they persist. The report contains concrete recommendations on ways to prevent and address conflict in Africa and on how to lay the foundations for subsequent durable peace. This holistic approach, as you yourself, Mr. President, called it this morning, is most welcome, and the European Union looks forward to further comprehensive discussions on all the aspects covered in the report.

The report encourages the European Union to continue its efforts in the field of peace-building and conflict prevention, management and resolution, and to enhance African capacities in these areas. The European Union is committed to a proactive policy on conflict prevention and resolution, focusing on preventing the outbreak of violent conflicts at an early stage as well as on post-conflict peace-building and using the full range of policy instruments available, including development assistance. These goals are set out in the European Union's common position on conflict prevention and resolution in Africa, agreed in 1997.

The European Union supports the Secretary-General's recommendations that the United Nations should develop closer relations with African regional and subregional organizations and arrangements and has itself established a consultative mechanism with the Organization of African Unity (OAU) which we wish to develop. The European Union also supports increased cooperation between the United Nations and subregional organizations in the areas of conflict prevention, management and resolution. It commends in particular the initiative of African States in the region to establish the Inter-African Mission to Monitor the Implementation of the Bangui Agreements (MISAB) peacekeeping operation in the Central African Republic, and the role of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in the resolution of the crises in Liberia and Sierra Leone. It also recognizes other regional initiatives such as the efforts to promote political dialogue in Burundi.

We also very much support the efforts which the United Nations and the OAU have made to follow up the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations' recommendations last year on efforts to enhance African peacekeeping capacity. The informal meeting on the subject, which Under-Secretary-General Miyet chaired, was a great success and provided a multilateral framework for activities in this area. We welcome the new role of the United Nations as a clearing house for information on such activities. Additional contributions to

the United Nations trust fund for enhancing African peacekeeping capacity would also strengthen the efforts of the United Nations.

The European Union also subscribes to the Secretary-General's idea that where necessary, early warning must be complemented by early action. The European Union has followed this approach by encouraging diplomatic efforts at early stages in unfolding crises, for example, through the appointment of its own special envoy to the Great Lakes region of Africa. Humanitarian assistance, like diplomatic efforts, is also an integral component of early action. As the largest donor of international humanitarian aid, the European Union fully endorses the Secretary-General's call for greater coordination in the provision of such aid and the need to ensure the security of humanitarian personnel. The European Union also welcomes the Secretary-General's initiative in calling for the establishment of an international mechanism to assist host Governments in maintaining the security and neutrality of refugee camps and settlements, and it looks forward to examining these ideas in greater depth.

The Secretary-General's report also examines sanctions as a tool which may be used in cases of threats to international peace and security. The European Union welcomes the Secretary-General's recommendation that sanctions should be better targeted at decision makers and endorses the call for more rigorous enforcement of sanctions by the international community. In particular, the Union supports the Secretary-General's focus on the need for effective measures to ensure the strict implementation of arms embargoes.

The European Union welcomes the Secretary-General's call for all African countries to participate in the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. The Union will continue to support efforts aimed at the establishment of effective national control measures on the transfer of conventional arms, combating illegal arms trafficking and the banning and clearing of anti-personnel landmines. Last year, the European Union agreed to a programme to combat illicit trafficking in conventional arms. As part of the programme, an international seminar involving the European Union and southern African countries and non-governmental organizations from both regions will take place in Johannesburg in May with a view to identifying practical solutions to the problems of illicit trafficking in southern Africa. The European Union also participated actively in the recent seminar in Oslo to discuss the proposal by Mali for a moratorium on the import, export and manufacture of light weapons in the Saharo-Sahelian region.

The European Union fully endorses the hope of the Secretary-General that the international community should strive to complement African efforts to resolve Africa's problems. The European Union welcomes the emphasis placed in the Secretary-General's report on the further development of regional cooperation and integration among African countries across a wide range of different fields. The European Union is due to host the third in a series of ministerial meetings between the Union and the Southern African Development Community in Vienna in November this year, and it is working to enhance its dialogue with subregional organizations, for example, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) in Eastern Africa and ECOWAS. The European Union is also in discussions with the OAU and its member States regarding a proposed European Union/Africa summit for the year 2000.

The Secretary-General's report rightly focuses on the importance of creating an environment in which durable peace is sustained and economic growth promoted. Recognizing that peace and security are indispensable preconditions for sustainable development, the European Union fully supports the emphasis in the report on the need for good governance, including respect for human rights and the rule of law. European Union member States are also working towards a common position on human rights, good governance, democracy and the rule of law in Africa which will complement their agreed position on conflict prevention. Like the rule of law, good governance is also crucial to economic growth, the promotion of social development and the alleviation of poverty. Such values are also essential pillars of the European Union's own development policy, which over several decades has been centred on a genuine partnership with Africa.

"Deeds not declarations", as my good friend the Ambassador of Nigeria said in his statement on behalf of ECOWAS. The European Union is the world's leading source of development assistance to Africa: over 50 per cent of all aid received by developing countries comes from the European Union, and the European Development Fund has earmarked over $15 billion for mainly African countries up to the year 2000. The European Union also offers, under the Lomé Convention, the most open markets for exports from African countries, and is Africa's largest trading partner. Presently, the European Union is engaged in a

comprehensive dialogue with the developing countries on how to strengthen and revitalise their partnership and in particular to assist them with their integration into the world economy. Against this background, the European Union welcomes the Secretary-General's recommendations on restructuring, international aid, reducing debt burdens and opening international markets. The European Union also applauds the emphasis in the report on the need to tackle poverty in Africa, and reaffirms its commitment to international development targets, in particular the aim of reducing by half the proportion of people living in extreme poverty by the year 2015. European Union member States are also committed to reducing the debt burden on African countries through measures such as the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Debt Initiative.

Throughout this report, the Secretary-General reinforces the view that it is in the interest of all States, not only African countries, to work towards the political, social and economic regeneration of Africa. The European Union supports this analysis and stands ready to play its part to ensure meaningful and effective follow-up of the many proposals and recommendations the Secretary-General has made. The European Union hopes that the Security Council will take early action on these where appropriate, and looks forward to opportunities in other United Nations bodies and forums to debate other aspects of the report more fully. The European Union believes that it is imperative that the political momentum generated by this report not be lost, and it is committed to working to ensure that Africa remains on the international agenda at the highest level.

The President: The next speaker is Mrs. Sadako Ogata, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, to whom the Council has extended an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure. I invite her to take a seat at the Council table and to make her statement.

Mrs. Ogata (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees): I am pleased to have the opportunity to comment on the Secretary-General's report on Africa, a comprehensive, timely and insightful document. With 7 million people of concern to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Africa continues to be the continent with the largest total number of refugees and internally displaced persons. Since the end of the cold war and the settlement of some long-standing conflicts, however, my Office has been increasingly involved in repatriation operations. Today, despite many problems, solutions are foreseeable for many refugee problems in Africa.

The report recognizes that addressing and resolving refugee problems is an indispensable contribution to peace and stability in the continent. Not only are forced population displacements a grave violation of human rights, they are also a factor which threatens the stability, and ultimately the peace and prosperity, of entire regions. The uprooting of hundreds of thousands of Rwandans between 1994 and 1997 sent dangerous shockwaves through the entire Great Lakes region and beyond. I should also mention the current crisis in Sierra Leone, which has displaced almost half a million people; the continued displacement of almost 300,000 Burundians; and the unresolved crises in the Horn of Africa.

Given the exhaustive nature of the Secretary-General's report, making any further points on the matters it raises would be redundant. I would however like to draw the attention of the Security Council to one issue which I consider of fundamental importance. The mixed nature of groups hosted in refugee camps — refugees coexisting with fighters, criminals and *génocidaires* — has been the greatest challenge to the work of my Office throughout the Great-Lakes-region crisis. I am concerned that this trend will expand further if no measure to deal with mixed groups in a rapid and effective manner is designed and implemented soon. I have already highlighted this major problem, in the course of the consultations of the Security Council last Tuesday.

Maintaining the civilian character of refugee camps is the responsibility of host Governments, as clearly stipulated by the 1969 Organization of African Unity (OAU) Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa. However, different situations may require a variety of responses. Rather than setting up a single mechanism, I would like to speak of a "ladder of options", a ladder of which the deployment of international police or military forces would be the step of last resort. Let me elaborate on this issue.

In what I would define as normal situations, adherence to certain basic principles of the OAU Convention is sufficient to ensure that camps are not used for military purposes: for example, locating them away from borders, or prohibiting the circulation of arms.

In situations in which it may be difficult for host Governments to implement the required principles, international assistance is needed in building their capacity to enforce law, for example through the provision of equipment and other logistical support for

police forces. My Office has been involved in this type of support in African countries, for example Kenya, for some years. At yet another level, capacity-building may involve training and even financial support for police forces. This is what my Office is currently doing in Tanzania, in refugee camps at the Burundian border. Let me remind the Council that in the former eastern Zaire this support went further, and included supervision by international officers and a very close operational relationship between UNHCR and military forces responsible for the maintenance of law and order in camps. While this arrangement did not ensure the separation of refugees from criminals, it did contribute to improving security, and should be considered when examining different options to maintain the civilian character of camps.

There are situations, however, in which building or supporting local capacity is inadequate to maintain the civilian character of camps. Separation of refugees from criminals can then become an important security requirement, and there may be no other option but to deploy international police or military forces. For such cases, I would like to express my strong support for the Secretary-General's call for the creation of an international mechanism to assist host Governments in maintaining the civilian character of camps. I hope that the Security Council will give concrete follow-up to this recommendation and will examine the possibility, for example, of creating a stand-by international force in support of humanitarian operations. Given the delicate and specific nature of any separation of refugees from criminals in a camp situation, my Office stands ready to help develop procedures and techniques for police and military forces to carry out this type of activity. It is essential also to define principles and decide on a division of work for dealing with those who will be separated and excluded from international protection.

There are of course other issues of interest to my Office in the report, to which I would briefly like to draw attention: the negative effect of sanctions on vulnerable groups, including returnees and internally displaced persons; the social and environmental effects of the presence of refugees and the importance of rehabilitation work in areas affected by massive human displacement; the need to address the continued gap between humanitarian assistance and the long-term reconstruction and development of war-torn societies; and, last but not least, the essential focus on civil society in African countries. The challenge more specifically is to develop grass-roots activities to promote community reconciliation in post-conflict situations, and ultimately to contribute to the prevention of further conflicts.

The President: The next speaker is Mrs. Sylvie Junod, Head of the delegation of the International Committee of the Red Cross to the United Nations, to whom the Council has extended an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure. I invite her to take a seat at the Council table and to make her statement.

Mrs. Junod (International Committee of the Red Cross) (*interpretation from French*): On behalf of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), I thank the Security Council for this opportunity to participate in today's debate relating to the report of the Secretary-General on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa.

The general problem of armed conflict is at the very heart of the concerns of the ICRC, an organization which is dedicated to preventing and alleviating suffering caused by war. Africa is the ICRC's major field of action, as reflected in our 19 operational and regional delegations, nearly half of our operations budget and some 3,000 staff members.

Needless to say, we shall not attempt today to comment exhaustively on the excellent analysis set out in the report of the Secretary-General. The ICRC hopes to be able to continue the consideration of these matters in the framework of its ongoing dialogue with the United Nations and with the Organization of African Unity (OAU). My statement will be limited to two major points: first, reaffirmation of the relevance of international humanitarian law; and secondly, the need for truly humanitarian action on behalf of the victims of conflicts, which can pave the way for reconstruction and make sustainable development possible.

Along with the Secretary-General, we note the drastic deterioration of the level of compliance with humanitarian norms in crisis situations. Acts of brutality and atrocities committed against civilians -- and more specifically against women and children and against refugees and displaced, captured or imprisoned persons — demand that all armed parties resume their respect for universal humanitarian principles.

The ICRC therefore supports this clear analysis and urgent appeal, given the proliferation of conflicts in those

countries in which structures have collapsed and of confrontations over identity in which the destruction and the annihilation of the human groups considered as rivals are the primary objective of the struggle. This is compounded by a new difficulty linked to the privatization of war and the emergence of forces that depend on individuals or private groups over which State authorities have little or no influence.

Africa is rich in traditions of deeply rooted human values, which are close to those of humanitarian law and are found in the codes that traditionally govern the waging of hostilities. Therefore, our joint challenge is to revive these values, particularly among youth, that vital force which constitutes three quarters of Africa's population.

This mobilization is a long-term preventive task to make each and every person aware that in all circumstances there are limits to violence, and neither those who order acts of violence, nor those who carry them out, nor those who tolerate them can say, "I did not know". All Member States of the United Nations have committed themselves not only to respect but also to ensure respect for treaties relating to humanitarian law. This universal obligation of solidarity towards all the victims of conflicts is everyone's business.

We must also emphasize the responsibility of each State to incorporate in its national legislation adequate measures relating to humanitarian law and to prosecute offenders. In this regard, the African countries have become involved in this process of legislative reform with the technical support of the consultative services of the ICRC.

It is sad but true that most of the time war criminals manage to escape any legal prosecution. The establishment by the Security Council of ad hoc Tribunals for the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda constitute an important stage in applying penal measures.

Today there is a need to work actively to establish a permanent international criminal court that can contribute to putting an end to impunity. A tribunal free from all political pressure, one whose competence would be broadly recognized and which would provide maximum guarantees for equitable judgement, would thus supplement national juridical systems. It would send the clear message to the perpetrators of crimes of international scope and their victims that impunity would no longer be tolerated.

The Secretary-General has emphasized the need to have the international community use in a consistent and coordinated fashion all the instruments available to it to achieve global solutions to conflicts. These solutions must take into account the political, social and economic elements without which lasting results cannot be obtained. The ICRC notes with increasing concern a growing tendency on the part of some States in recent years to resort to humanitarian action instead of political action, or indeed military action, when this is justified within the framework of relevant international instruments. Central Africa provides a good illustration.

Nothing, however, can replace the political will to address the causes of conflicts and the tragedies they cause with all of the legitimate means available, including force. Humanitarian assistance cannot be a substitute. It is up to the organizations with a genuinely humanitarian mission and means of action to provide that assistance to the victims of conflicts. The question of the security of refugees in the Great Lakes region provides us an obvious example. Today we are seeing the tragic consequences.

Acknowledging the need for a strategic approach, politicians, the military and humanitarians must harmonize their actions. They must seek a synergy between their actions and in their interdependence, but also in their respective mandates and particular characteristics. This approach, however, should not subordinate all humanitarian action to political objectives, to the detriment of principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence. The interest of the victims is always at the core of the ICRC's concerns and operations.

This does not mean, however, that humanitarian action has no political dimension or that it never has an impact on the evolution of a conflict. The presence of humanitarian organizations has sometimes turned out to have a negative impact by serving the objectives of war. That was the case in Liberia in 1996, when the competition between the organizations in the field resulted in the prolongation of the conflict, thus gravely endangering the victims.

The ICRC is just as concerned as the Secretary-General by emergency situations in which there are many bodies providing assistance whose objectives and methods of work differ. Such situations require the actors to harmonize their actions and avoid duplication. The point of such coordination is to make it possible to manage

various activities, in time and in space, in a context that is often unstable and rapidly changing. The security of all depends very much on this.

The report highlights the need to link and to integrate concepts and actions relating to assistance, rehabilitation, reconstruction and development. The ICRC fully shares this point of view. In its assistance actions, the ICRC, insofar as possible, has opted for an approach in which the ultimate objective is to allow individuals and the communities involved to regain their autonomy and to break their dependence on external assistance by closely involving the beneficiaries in the conception and implementation of these programmes.

It is in this framework that we find the efforts undertaken in many African situations to restore the means of production of population groups that have fallen victim to war, such as agriculture, livestock, fishing and crafts. The same holds true for programmes designed to restore basic health services, as well as for the provision of equipment and prostheses for war amputees and for repairing systems of supplying drinking water and disposing of waste water and refuse.

In its work, the ICRC mobilizes all possible local support. For the ICRC, as for the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, the network of African national associations represents enormous support. The volunteers from these associations often work in extremely difficult conditions. Many of them have died during the last few months in carrying out their mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and in the Republic of the Congo.

It also seems important to emphasize the other essential element for the ICRC's action, which is protection. To render assistance without concern for protection would be absurd, and could even be counterproductive. Any effective intervention for the victims must simultaneously allow them to receive their required material assistance, protect them from dangers that prolong and exacerbate their suffering and ensure respect for their dignity.

Action by the ICRC regarding protection is primarily aimed at ensuring respect for life and the physical integrity of individuals. Such action is inseparable from action to promote human rights, whose ultimate goal is the functioning of civil society and the enjoyment of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights.

Finally, allow me to say how greatly the security of their personnel concerns the humanitarian organizations working within the framework of these conflicts. In addition to the usual threats and dangers, the changing nature of wars, the growing numbers of individuals engaging in violence, the diversity of their roles and interests and the general increase in banditry are curtailing yet further the control that authorities in the field have over these individuals and is increasing the vulnerability of humanitarian workers. Members will recall the murders carried out in Rwanda and Burundi, the rapes committed in Sierra Leone and in the former Zaire and the hostage-taking in the Sudan.

An African proverb says, "Only man is better than man, only man is worse than man". We are firmly convinced — as the Secretary-General would agree — that the best in each person is an inexhaustible source of energy and hope. Today, 10 of our colleagues were freed after having been held for 10 days by their kidnappers in Somalia. I would like to share our happiness and relief with the Council.

The President: The next speaker on my list is the representative of Germany. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Henze (Germany): At the outset, I wish to subscribe fully to the statement made by the Presidency of the European Union. Allow me to add just a few additional points that are of particular importance to us.

First, I would like to express particular thanks to the Secretary-General for his profound, comprehensive and well-balanced report. It is both impressive and inspiring. The recommendations contained therein are action-oriented and of great practical relevance.

The Secretary-General presented his report at a crucial time of historical importance. Nine years after the crumbling of the Berlin Wall, we are beginning to develop and to adapt to new parameters in the field of international relations as we leave the legacy of the cold war behind. The Secretary-General describes in detail what immediate impact this historical transition has had on Africa in general and on some of the conflicts between African countries — and inside some of them as well. He rightly draws the conclusion that significant progress in Africa will require sustained international attention at the highest political level. Only then will we avoid marginalization of this continent and the so-called Afro-pessimism.

From a German perspective, the changes that have occurred since the end of the cold war have had wide-ranging implications. In terms of foreign policy, the most important one is that we are no longer pre-eminently preoccupied by what was previously called the "German question". It is true, Africa has always been important to us. My country is present in almost every African capital. This allows us to maintain a permanent dialogue with the Governments on all issues of common interest and common concern.

Even more important is close cooperation for development. The Secretary-General rightly points out in paragraph 79 of his report that

> "Development is ... central to the prospects for reducing conflict in Africa."

Germany is meeting its obligations as a donor country. From 1991 to 1996, my country spent roughly 22 billion deutsche marks on bilateral and multilateral development cooperation for sub-Saharan Africa. Our overall debt relief for African countries amounts to DM 9.7 billion. From 1994 to 1997, our bilateral and multilateral humanitarian aid for the Great Lakes region alone — including our contribution to European aid — amounted to DM 583 million. In the crucial area of mine clearance, Germany has since 1995 spent DM 18 million for various projects mainly in Angola and Mozambique.

On our political agenda, Africa and African affairs have never ranked higher. We are devoting more rather then less attention to Africa as a result of the end of the cold war.

One of the most important conclusions to be drawn from the Secretary-General's report is that a renewed spirit of partnership is urgently required. The Secretary-General points to the responsibility Africans ought to assume for their own affairs on the one hand and to the obligations of the international community on the other. Acknowledging and respecting African ownership and offering and accepting advice, support and cooperation must be core values of this partnership.

To be able to consolidate this partnership we have to overcome a widespread case-by-case approach in which we mainly react when impressed by a full-fledged crisis. This partnership must rather be at the centre of what I would call an attempt to build a framework of interlocking and mutually reinforcing multilateral institutions. I would like to highlight just three important aspects of this more general task.

First, the task starts here in New York, here at the United Nations. Drawing on my own personal experience during Germany's non-permanent membership in the Security Council during the years 1995 and 1996, and deeply impressed by the contributions made by our colleagues from African delegations there, I am of the conviction that this body needs to be reformed. We have to overcome what the Secretary-General rightly describes as a paralysis that threatens to undermine the credibility of the Organization as a whole. The reform must, among other things, put Africa in a position to shoulder the responsibility of permanent membership.

Let me add at this point that recently we have been observing with some concern that in some cases financial considerations seem to play an important role in the decision-making process within the Security Council. It goes without saying that we all have to provide the United Nations with the financial resources it needs to carry out the tasks assigned to it.

Secondly, the Organization of African Unity and subregional organizations in Africa ought to be strengthened for the reasons extensively described in the Secretary-General's report. This applies particularly to the improvement of their respective capacities in the areas of conflict prevention, confidence-building and peacekeeping. Germany is contributing bilaterally as well as through multilateral channels — primarily through the European Union — towards achieving this very important goal. We agree entirely with the Secretary-General that these efforts have to take place within the context of the United Nations primary responsibility for matters of international peace and security. If we point to the importance of developing genuine African capacity in these areas, we also do so due to the unique historical experience of European countries since the Second World War. Functioning multilateral structures such as the European Union, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the Council of Europe have contributed immensely to reconciliation, peace and prosperity in a continent that for centuries was ravaged by ferocious wars. In this context, we maintain our position that an international conference on peace, security and stability in the Great Lakes region, under the chairmanship of the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity, could have a positive impact on the situation in this region.

Thirdly, Germany believes that the establishment of a permanent international criminal court should be pursued as a top priority, as the representative of the International Committee of the Red Cross has just stated. In paragraph 49 of his report the Secretary-General points out the importance of effectively reacting to what he calls

> "a dramatic and unacceptable deterioration in the level of adherence to humanitarian norms in crisis situations".

We will actively contribute to the forthcoming diplomatic conference, in June and July of this year, for the establishment of a permanent international criminal court. A lot of work still has to be done if we are to overcome the remaining legal and political hurdles. We are happy that many African countries are actively participating in the preparations for the establishment of such a court in Rome.

Building and constantly strengthening such a framework of interlocking and mutually reinforcing multilateral institutions would, in our view, be the most ambitious and also the most rewarding strategy to promote durable peace and sustainable development in Africa.

Besides pursuing these rather long-range objectives, Germany will continue its efforts to contribute to practical measures of a more concrete nature. Let me give a few examples to illustrate our recent activities in this regard.

Concerning the goal of stopping the proliferation of arms, I wish to stress that under German national law any export of weapons into zones of conflict or tension is illegal and strictly prohibited. This provision is implemented in the strictest possible way. We wholeheartedly subscribe to all the recommendations of the Secretary-General related to this aspect. In the General Assembly, we addressed the problem of the illegal flow of small arms and light weapons in the context of the General Assembly resolution on consolidation of peace through practical disarmament measures. We recently contributed to the Trust Fund to support the work of the reactivated International Commission of Inquiry on illegal arms flows to Rwanda.

The situation in the Great Lakes region was the theme of a major conference of German ambassadors which took place recently in Nairobi, chaired by the Minister for Foreign Affairs. We will gladly make available the final document of that conference to interested delegations. Allow me also to highlight the international workshops organized by the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs held annually in Berlin, the last of which was devoted to the Great Lakes region under the topic of improving African and international capabilities for preventing and resolving violent conflict.

We continue to support financially the diplomatic efforts of the Special Representative of the United Nations and the OAU for the Great Lakes region, Ambassador Sahnoun, and the Representative of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes region, Berhanu Dinka, as well as the mediation efforts of former President Nyerere in the Burundi conflict.

As an important donor country, we have taken very careful note of the points made by the Secretary-General in his report on restructuring international aid, reducing debt burdens and the opening of international markets to more privately based economic exchange and partnership. We look forward to more detailed discussions of these questions within the United Nations and other international institutions.

The President: The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Canada. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Fowler (Canada) (*interpretation from French*): Thank you, Mr. President, for convening this important meeting on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa. We hope this will be the first of a series of Security Council meetings at which we can review our collective efforts in support of peace and development in Africa. Steadfast and long-term commitments will be essential if the objectives set out in the report are to be achieved.

The recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General are vast in scope but practical and well conceived. They have the general support of the Government of Canada.

Some of the strongest messages in this report lie not in its recommendations but in the analyses that it contains. The Secretary-General rightly conveys one such message when he states in paragraph 45 that the efforts to reinforce the capacity of African countries to operate in peacekeeping missions

> "are not in any way intended to relieve the broader international community of its collective obligations under the Charter of the United Nations".

We completely agree with the Secretary-General's implied conclusion that collaboration in capacity-building in Africa must not have the objective of equipping Africans to respond to crises in Africa solely so as to absolve the international community of that responsibility. A selective allocation of responsibility for intervening in crises would be no more acceptable in Africa than it would be anywhere else in the world, and would, we believe, undermine the very notion of collective responsibility and collective action that underpins the Charter.

Collaboration with a view to the development of African peacekeeping capacity should instead aim to ensure that African States receive the support they require in order to play a still greater role in future United Nations peacekeeping operations, both on the African continent and elsewhere. We have worked with the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in developing a comprehensive survey of African peacekeeping capacity. We have also provided bilateral assistance to 14 countries through our Military Training Assistance Plan.

Canadian Blue Helmets have had the privilege of serving alongside African troops on many occasions in Africa and elsewhere. They are doing so again in the Central African Republic, where Canadian soldiers have been deployed in the United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic (MINURCA) alongside soldiers from Burkina Faso, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, France, Gabon, Mali, Senegal and Togo. This deployment reaffirms our deep commitment both to collective action in general and, more specifically, to collaboration with our African partners.

We consider particularly compelling the Secretary-General's observation, in paragraph 46 of the report, that

> "Failure to act in the face of serious threats to peace and human lives in Africa threatens the credibility and legitimacy of the United Nations not only in the area of peace and security but also in other areas of its work."

The credibility of the Security Council in particular is directly linked to its willingness to act decisively and effectively to make available the necessary resources to counter threats to peace and security. The few hundred Blue Helmets, including a handful of Canadians, who found themselves in Rwanda under the United Nations flag after April 1994, experienced — and continue to relive today — the profound horror and confusion caused by their inability to prevent or mitigate even to a small extent the flagrant genocide because the Security Council abandoned them and persistently failed to provide the support and the troops that we all knew were needed.

I visited those brave soldiers at the beginning of June 1994, and I witnessed their courageous efforts to save the lives of 25,000 people scattered throughout the camps around Kigali, despite the battles for the capital, which they were incapable of influencing. I cannot adequately describe the feeling of abandonment, isolation and frustration that these soldiers — our soldiers — experienced when faced with such events. They believed that with modest resources they would have been able to save hundreds of thousands more lives. They were ready to take the necessary risks — and they took them anyway. It was we, in New York and in our capitals, who did not want to take on such risks. They had laid down the plans for the rescue operation. Only our will was lacking.

We owe to our soldiers and to those they are sent to protect a commitment never to repeat this tragic experience. The Secretary-General is obviously right to draw attention to the "poisonous legacy" engendered by our collective failure in Rwanda and to remind us that we, the Member States, must be prepared to fulfil our obligations under the Charter if the integrity of our Organization is to be preserved.

A third message concerns the need to follow up the first signs of a crisis with timely and effective action. It is not enough simply to act. If the United Nations is to be effective and credible, its Members must act with dispatch in responding to crises. Canada's efforts to enhance the Organization's ability to respond rapidly to crises — for example, through the creation of a rapidly deployable mission headquarters unit — reflect its conviction that without both the capacity and the will for early and effective action, early warning is of little value. So, too, does our contribution of half a million dollars to the United Nations trust fund for preventive action, set up to enhance the Secretary-General's ability to head off emerging crises.

[*spoke in English*]

The Secretary-General emphasizes throughout his report the importance of collaboration with regional and subregional bodies in Africa. The Organization of African Unity (OAU) has developed a much improved capacity to respond to crises since its Cairo Summit of 1993. Canada has provided approximately $2 million in support of the OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention,

Management and Resolution, and we enjoy an excellent consultative relationship with the OAU in this area. Several of the subregional bodies of Africa, such as the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development and the Southern African Development Community are also enhancing their capacity to promote stability. All need, and all merit, greater support.

Subregional bodies have also demonstrated the capacity to undertake enforcement action with effect. Sierra Leoneans warmly welcomed the troops of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Monitoring Group (ECOMOG), who reversed the coup in Freetown last May. Regional and subregional bodies possess the capacity, expertise and, most importantly, the commitment to act, and, as the Secretary-General observes in his report, there may be instances when they represent a better option than United Nations peacekeeping forces. It is incumbent upon us to ensure that this complementary capacity continues to be nurtured.

We must, however, be vigilant to avoid the dangers of cascading responsibility for peacekeeping from the global level to the regional or even the subregional level. We cannot subcontract responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, even by default. Regional and subregional bodies should respond, not to vacuums created as a result of inaction on the part of the Security Council, but to collaborative programmes developed in close consultation with the Council. Such collaboration should be based on Articles 53 and 54 of the United Nations Charter and ought fully to reflect the Security Council's exclusive mandate for authorizing the use of force.

Allow me briefly to speak to five particular issues raised by the Secretary-General with reference to Africa. All reflect matters currently before the Security Council in one form or another. Their solution will demand the utmost creativity and perseverance on the part of Council members.

The first relates to child soldiers. We applaud the Secretary-General's appointment of a Special Representative to study the impact of armed conflict on children. We were pleased to host Mr. Otunnu a couple of weeks ago in Canada. The Canadian Government has announced contributions to programmes to assist in the demobilization and reintegration of child soldiers in Liberia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo and towards the provision of assistance for children abducted by rebel forces in northern Uganda. We join the Secretary-General in endorsing the notion of children as "zones of peace" and in urging that this concept be expanded. We applaud the increased attention that the Security Council has focused on the practice of recruiting child combatants and urge that it continue to do so. We also applaud the attention the Council has focused on the demobilization of child combatants and other fighters.

The second issue relates to the protection of civilians, including humanitarian aid workers, in situations of conflict. Attacks on humanitarian personnel are increasingly common. A Canadian aid worker was detained in Sierra Leone recently; only a couple of weeks ago a Canadian human rights observer was arrested and detained in the Democratic Republic of the Congo; and ten Red Cross and Red Crescent personnel were kidnapped recently in Somalia. We welcome the release, earlier today, of the Red Cross and Red Crescent personnel. We agree with the Secretary-General that such attacks are unconscionable and undermine the basic conditions of humanitarian assistance, and also that international humanitarian and human rights norms must be respected by all parties to a conflict. We also agree that more needs to be done to protect women and children from the effects of conflict.

A connected issue, the protection of refugees, is especially vexing. The mandate provided by the Security Council for the multinational force in eastern Zaire, which Canada undertook to lead, did not provide for the disarming of former combatants and their separation from non-combatants in and around the refugee camps, in significant part because the number of soldiers this would have required far exceeded the number that Member States were willing to pay for and provide. We share the Secretary-General's support for the establishment of an international mechanism to assist host Governments in maintaining the security and neutrality of refugee camps and settlements, as a means of helping to avoid future recurrences of the dilemma encountered by refugees fleeing eastern Zaire.

The third issue relates to economic sanctions. We agree with the Secretary-General that greater use should be made of much more finely and carefully targeted sanctions to maximize their impact on those who are creating the problems and to minimize the extensive damage they cause to ordinary people. Surely we have learned by now that sanctions are a very blunt instrument indeed. Recent experiences in Sierra Leone, the Great Lakes region and Iraq remind us that even when sanctions are selective and an effort is made to provide

for humanitarian exemptions, widespread suffering usually occurs. We acknowledge that increasingly the Council and the Secretary-General have taken greater care in assessing and seeking to mitigate the humanitarian impact of economic sanctions. The Council cannot, however, allow sanctions to become a policy tool of preference merely because other options are even less palatable.

The fourth issue relates to the proliferation of small arms. Arms expenditures reduce the resources available for development. We support the Secretary-General's call upon African countries to follow the world trend towards capping or indeed reducing military spending, and we acknowledge the efforts and accomplishments of those countries that have already achieved a reduction in defense expenditures. Of equal concern, however, is the regional instability that the proliferation of small arms engenders, as we have witnessed throughout Africa. We would like here to follow the example of many previous speakers and salute the President of Mali for his leadership in seeking to achieve a moratorium on the export, import and manufacture of light weapons in West Africa. We hope that his valiant efforts are emulated elsewhere on the continent. We have been pleased to work with the Institute for Security Studies in South Africa on an extensive survey of the impact of the increased availability of small arms in southern and central Africa and on the development of an action plan for the control of small arms in the region. We hope the Security Council will address itself to this issue as a matter of urgency, as recommended by the Secretary-General.

The Canadian Government and the non-governmental Canadian Centre for International Peace and Security have also collaborated with the Institute for Security Studies on a study of a related issue, the growing "privatization" of security and violence. This issue, too, merits the attention of the Council as it is essential that security institutions remain accountable to civilian Governments and the people they serve.

The fifth issue is post-conflict peace-building. We agree with the Secretary-General that the consolidation of peace in the aftermath of conflict requires an integrated effort beyond purely diplomatic and military action. The Canadian Government announced a Canadian peace-building initiative in 1996, one important component of which is a $20 million peace-building fund to support local initiatives to achieve reconciliation, reconstruction and recovery. We applaud the World Bank's increased involvement in peace-building, and also the higher priority the Security Council is giving to this critical phase in national reconstruction. The Peace-Building Support Office in Liberia provides an important model.

You would not expect a Canadian to intervene in such a debate without raising our collective efforts to ban anti-personnel mines. It is a matter we believe is very much germane to the thrust of the Secretary-General's report but which, in fact, receives no mention in this otherwise comprehensive document. The proliferation of anti-personnel mines, which have had such a devastating impact on development in Africa and imposed such an egregious cost in terms of human lives lost and ruined, not least in Angola and Mozambique, has an impact across the spectrum of Africa's development and security agenda. Thirty-eight African countries are among the more than 120 to have signed the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction since it was opened for signature in Ottawa last December. South Africa played a vital role in creating this treaty, and Mauritius was among the very first to ratify it. We understand that Mali, South Africa and Zimbabwe expect to do so soon. There are, no doubt, others in a similar situation. Forty ratifications are needed to achieve entry into force, a goal which, of course, Africa alone could achieve.

We laud the Secretary-General's steadfast commitment to mine action in Africa and elsewhere, and acknowledge the collaborative efforts of the United Nations Children's Fund and the OAU in encouraging early ratification of the treaty, particularly in Africa.

Reflected throughout the report before us is the Secretary-General's conviction that respect for human rights and the rule of law are necessary components of any effort to make peace durable, a conviction we of course share. Important progress is being made in Africa both in promoting human rights and in strengthening democratic governance. The Harare Declaration of 1991 was of course agreed in Africa, and its expression of commitment to democracy, good governance, human rights and the rule of law is finding resonance throughout the continent.

The development of vibrant judicial institutions is especially important. Canada contributed $1 million towards the Criminal Tribunal in Rwanda in order to accelerate efforts to bring those responsible for the genocide to justice and to help bring an end to a culture of impunity.

Canada has also provided police monitors and advisers to several United Nations missions in Africa. We note with satisfaction the significant contribution made by civilian police from African countries in United Nations operations, and we are exploring ways to enhance our mutual capacity in this area.

The report before the Council reminds us that political progress cannot be achieved in an economic vacuum and that development is itself a human right, as well as the principal long-term objective of all countries of Africa. We agree that long-term and sustainable success can be achieved only if African countries enact sound economic policies that will help integrate Africa more fully into the global economy.

Donors also have significant obligations, and we share deeply the Secretary-General's belief that official development assistance remains a vital component of our collective efforts to focus the potential of Africa and that it has a critical role to play in ensuring that African nations find and remain on the path of poverty-reducing economic growth and social development.

We also share the Secretary-General's view that debt burdens must be reduced. Canada has provided well over $15 billion in aid to Africa, always working closely with our African partners to ensure that such assistance responds to their particular needs. We remain fully committed to this partnership. We have forgiven debt wherever possible, and will seek further opportunities to do so.

While not a substitute for official development assistance, trade and investment can also be powerful levers for development, and Africa is increasingly realizing its potential in both domains. Canada now exports over $1 billion worth of goods to Africa each year, a quantity which is exceeded by African exports to Canada. Our direct investment in Africa has tripled since 1989. We are also forging new partnerships in telecommunications and information processing. The African Information Society Initiative, an action plan designed by Africans in collaboration with Canada's International Development Research Centre, will help harness the development potential of new information and communications technologies.

The exceptional report before us is ultimately about the renewal of commitment among the peoples of Africa, between African people and their Governments, among African countries, between Africa and the United Nations and between African and non-African Member States. I welcome this opportunity to reaffirm Canada's enduring commitment to Africa. Canada has striven to accommodate Africa's fundamental development needs while facilitating pan-African efforts to promote unity, commerce, peace and security. We remain steadfast in our commitment to this partnership.

The President: The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Tunisia. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Hachani (Tunisia) (*interpretation from French*): My delegation would first of all like to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month and to wish you complete success in your work. I also extend my congratulations to your predecessor, the Ambassador of the Gambia, for the excellent work he accomplished last month.

The holding of this Security Council meeting to consider the report of the Secretary-General of 13 April 1998, entitled "The causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa", is indeed a major event, in view of the interest that both Africa and the entire international community have in this issue.

Tunisia, which since the advent of its new era on 7 November 1987 has made solidarity and cooperation with Africa pillars of its diplomacy, welcomes the interest shown by the Security Council, which took the initiative of holding a ministerial meeting on 25 September 1997 on the situation in Africa, at which it adopted a presidential statement, contained in document S/PRST/1997/46. That statement requested the Secretary-General to submit a report to the Security Council, which is the subject of our meeting.

My delegation would like to thank the Secretary-General for the painstaking preparation of this report, as well as for its exhaustive and detailed content. This marks a new and welcome chapter in the increasing interest in the cause of Africa. This last chapter saw the establishment by the Security Council of a new United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic on 15 March 1998. This was a particularly important event, as it had been more than three years since the United Nations had established a peacekeeping operation in Africa.

In order to consider the report of the Secretary-General, one must first place the question within the

current African context. That context is characterized by the growing awareness on the part of African States that the roots of the problems must be addressed by adopting an approach that dismisses the entirely obsolete vision that the continent is assailed by irremediable misfortunes.

The successes attained by Africa in its struggle against colonialism and apartheid resulted from the determination of its peoples and leaders to defend their cause and reach the goals they set for themselves. This spirit has never dimmed, and is renewed today by the enthusiasm of meeting the challenges in the darkest hours, an enthusiasm that has always inspired the sons and daughters of Africa.

Certainly, our continent remains the theatre of conflicts that require us all to shoulder our responsibilities. Nonetheless, our determination to restore and maintain peace has remained constant and is particularly manifest in the role of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), an accomplishment of which we Africans are very proud.

This determination became even more evident with the establishment in 1993 of the Central Organ of the OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution and with the commitment Africa undertook at the Thirtieth Summit of the OAU, held in Tunis, to solve the equation "peace, security and development" by relying first and foremost on African capacity. This marked a new phase in Africa's approach to continent-wide cooperation, the main focus of which is prevention in its widest sense and the principle of the peaceful settlement of disputes.

The OAU Central Organ has played a crucial role in addressing several conflict situations and remains very useful to preserving peace and security on the continent in the understanding that, as affirmed by the United Nations Charter, the Security Council remains the organ with the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security.

The United Nations and the Organization of African Unity have already undertaken to strengthen their relationship by establishing machinery for consultation and cooperation to enhance the join action of the two organizations, particularly that of the OAU with regard to the maintenance of peace and the prevention of conflict. We welcome the interest of the Secretary-General in this question and his intention to continue promoting cooperation between the two organizations.

The Security Council meeting of 25 September 1997 gave a new dimension to the importance of international cooperation in helping Africa to meet the challenges before it. This spirit was clearly reflected in the meeting of 5 December 1997, held at United Nations Headquarters, on enhancing African capacity for peacekeeping. That meeting was characterized by the determination to lend the necessary support to the continent for that purpose. It was stipulated that initiatives in that framework must be taken on the basis of parameters defined by the African States themselves, in accordance with the objectives of the Organization of African Unity and in close cooperation with the United Nations Security Council.

We believe that it is important to promote these initiatives on the basis of universally agreed principles in order to ensure all due success. Similarly, and given the fact that United Nations and OAU activities in the maintenance of peace and the prevention of conflicts complement one another, it is essential that the international community attach all due importance to strengthening pan-African capacity with material and financial support to the Central Organ of the OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution.

The new impulse in the maintenance of peace and security that we are witnessing today on the part of the African States is accompanied by a rebirth, characterized by the implementation by those States of far-reaching political and economic reforms. Indeed, having long lived under the one-party system, Africa is increasingly turning towards pluralist systems and the establishment of democratic constitutional institutions. Those States have also been drafting policies to ensure that the principles of democracy and respect for human rights are firmly rooted in society. These efforts should be recognized by the international community and encouraged through positive activities that take into account the social realities of the continent and its components, as well as the necessary global and interdependent approach to human rights, including the right to development.

In another vein, for several years now the African States have been adopting new economic policies that have entailed real challenges for them. These policies were aimed at reflecting Africa's commitment to undertaking reforms in keeping with its development needs and priorities by taking into account the imperatives of globalization. The difficulties encountered in this regard were such that it was necessary to make structural adjustments and to liberalize the economy by opening national productive infrastructures to

international competition. This had the difficult social and budgetary consequences which the Secretary-General recalls in his report.

For its part, within the context of its reform and restructuring policies, Tunisia has adopted a wide-ranging and humanist approach, guaranteeing the harmonious development of society. While seeking the financial and budgetary equilibrium it requires, the Tunisian Government has endeavoured to take broad social action focused on education, training and national solidarity.

While certain African countries have obtained encouraging results in recent years with regard to economic growth, others, unfortunately, have encountered huge obstacles impeding their development. In this regard, States that are emerging from a recent conflict find themselves in an even worse situation, since they have to start from scratch with the reconstruction and economic recovery of their countries.

Today, it is widely held that there can be no sustainable development without lasting peace, just as there can be no lasting peace without sustainable development. Moreover, the Secretary-General is right to point out in his introduction to this report that reducing poverty must be a priority, because success in that field will determine peace and development alike.

The current international economic situation is characterized by trends and situations that are not all conducive to supporting the efforts of the African States to promote their own development and improve the well-being of their peoples. Reduced official development assistance, the debt burden and the imbalance in world trade competition are factors whose impact on the still fragile economies of the States of the continent give rise to great concern. That is why we believe it necessary to prepare an effective comprehensive plan for African development in order to facilitate the continent's integration into the world economy.

It is likewise crucial to give special attention to promoting regional and subregional integration in the framework of existing mechanisms on the continent. Tunisia attaches particular importance to Maghreb integration in the framework of the Arab Maghreb Union. The Tunisian Government considers this integration to be a strategic option and strives tirelessly to strengthen and develop it. We also attach great importance to integration at the continental level, as manifested in the Abuja Treaty.

In this context, we believe that the development of the African economies can also profit from cooperation, particularly technical cooperation, among developing countries and from triangular cooperation linking African countries with developed countries or multilateral development agencies. Moreover, while emphasizing the importance of the Secretary-General's ideas on the African debt question, as mentioned in his report, we would reiterate the appeal, voiced by President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali of the Republic of Tunisia, that debt be recycled to the benefit of social projects and environmental protection.

The Secretary-General's report is a far-reaching contribution that stresses several highly sensitive issues and includes most interesting recommendations for helping Africa to meet its challenges and overcome the difficulties it faces. The report should allow us to continue educating the international community about the needs of the continent — the entire continent — in order to preserve stability, peace and the well-being of its citizens. While we support the spirit of the approach proposed by the Secretary-General, we feel it to be crucial that we continue, in both the Security Council and the General Assembly, to give further thought to translating this obvious interest in the continent into concrete and effective measures.

The President: I thank the representative of Tunisia for the kind words he addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of the Republic of Korea. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Park (Republic of Korea): My delegation welcomes wholeheartedly the Secretary-General's comprehensive and timely report on Africa, pursuant to the presidential statement adopted at the special ministerial meeting on Africa in September of last year. I should also like to thank you, Mr. President, for your able leadership in guiding the deliberations of the Council. My congratulations also go to your predecessor, the Ambassador of Gabon, on his successful presidency during the month of March.

The Republic of Korea believes that for there to be durable peace, stability and development in Africa, conflict resolution in that region calls for a comprehensive approach that takes into account the complex range of root causes and the devastating consequences in the region. This is why my delegation

welcomes the Secretary-General's analysis of the diverse sources of conflict in Africa and the various strategies intended to respond to conflict situations.

Despite the continent's many unresolved issues and uncertainties, there is strong optimism in Africa these days. In many countries across Africa, dedicated political leaders and hard-working people have contributed to accelerating economic development on a sustainable basis, and democracy has taken firm root, and this trend is spreading all across the continent. Equally encouraging is the fact that the Security Council, reflecting the international community's firm commitment to durable peace and development in Africa, has been actively engaged in the continent. In addition, the Secretary-General has undertaken many initiatives for Africa and introduced pragmatic recommendations in his report.

Against that backdrop, I should now like to make several comments on the Secretary-General's report.

First, the strategy of conflict prevention is an essential element in addressing conflicts in Africa. As we are well aware, it is far less costly to prevent crises than to react to them. However, it is also true that crises cannot be prevented by mere words of warning. Indeed, advance warning is important, but to be effective it should be matched by early preventive action. In this regard, we believe that such proactive measures as the dispatch of fact-finding missions at an early stage and the preventive deployment of peacekeepers should be further developed.

We are also of the view that the international community should undertake more resolute efforts to stanch the arms flow into the region, thereby eliminating one of the structural causes of persistent conflicts. Among other things, we need to ensure stricter compliance with the arms embargoes imposed by the Security Council on conflict areas in Africa. To that end, my country firmly supports the Secretary-General's proposal that Member States should enact legislation facilitating prosecution in national courts of violations of Security Council arms embargoes, and that the Council should have an urgent look at the source of arms trafficking and at illicit arms merchants.

Secondly, the Security Council, in its presidential statement on protection for humanitarian assistance in conflict situations adopted last June, highlighted the need for protection to alleviate the suffering of refugees and displaced persons in conflict situations. At that time, we stressed, *inter alia*, that it is virtually impossible to provide effective relief and protection for those in environments where the warring parties refuse to abide by the norms of international humanitarian law.

In this context, we support fully the Secretary-General's recommendations to hold combatants financially liable to their victims under international law and to develop international legal machinery to facilitate efforts not only to seize the assets of transgressing parties and their leaders but also to hold those who violate rules of international humanitarian law criminally responsible. We also concur with the Secretary-General's point that refugees should be settled at a reasonable distance from any border, in camps of limited size, in accordance with the Organization of African Unity's refugee Convention.

By the same token, we highly appreciate the Secretary-General's initiative for a follow-up to the presidential statement on protection for humanitarian assistance and look forward to his comprehensive report containing practical recommendations. Among other things, we hope practical measures will be forthcoming on how to ensure separation of bona fide refugees from militants and a "zone of peace" for children in conflict situations.

Thirdly, the Secretary-General has emphasized the importance of good governance and sustainable development as long-term guarantors of peace. We could not agree more. Any prescription for conflict must treat its root causes. The primary tenets of good governance — democratic institutions and practices and respect for human rights based upon reverence for life — are fundamental to the durable peace and prosperity of the continent, channelling ethnic and tribal differences into the democratic process.

To help sustain the encouraging pace of economic growth and reform in Africa, the international community needs to provide active support, financial and otherwise, to the various initiatives already under way or planned for African development. We are of the view that the Secretary-General's diverse and specific recommendations to that effect call for the strong support of the international community for their immediate implementation.

The Secretary-General, by way of his report, has prescribed potentially far-reaching remedies for the political, economic, and social ills which have encumbered the African continent for so long. It is a blueprint for change in the way of life in the continent and emphasizes the substantial role all Africans must play

in defining their future. We share the Secretary-General's view that conflict in Africa is neither inevitable nor intractable. As he points out, conflict is caused by human action, and can be ended by human action.

Now the question is, can the international community and the people of Africa summon the political will to bring about such action? I have complete faith in our concerted ability to do so. A good beginning has already been made through last year's ministerial meeting and today's open debate on the Secretary-General's report. Now it is incumbent upon us to sustain that momentum. We look forward to the biennial ministerial meetings and the summit meeting of the Council in five years, as proposed by the Secretary-General. For its part, the Republic of Korea, as an ardent supporter of Africa's ongoing endeavour towards durable peace and sustainable development, will continue to be actively involved in that common effort.

The President: I thank the representative of the Republic of Korea for the kind words he addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Egypt. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Elaraby (Egypt) (*interpretation from Arabic*): I wish at the outset to thank the Secretary-General and his staff, and all others who contributed to the valuable report that has been submitted to both the Security Council and the General Assembly. The report unquestionably reflects the determination of the United Nations to absorb the lessons of the past, and at the same time sets out an ambitious vision for the future shape of United Nations efforts regarding Africa and its political, economic and humanitarian questions, with a view to achieving the lofty purposes of the United Nations, as defined in the Charter.

Early on, the report rightly notes that it is impossible to address the current situation in Africa without considering the historical, geographical, political, ethnic and economic elements of what the African continent experienced between the end of the nineteenth century and the end of the cold war just a few years ago. It is axiomatic that any concept of a lasting solution must take all of these considerations into account.

As today's debate is taking place in the Security Council, which is primarily concerned with the maintenance of international peace and security, my statement will concentrate on the aspects of the Secretary-General's report that relate to issues within the Council's purview, bearing in mind that other aspects of the report will later be considered in detail in the General Assembly.

Since 1993 Africa has been taking tangible, positive steps towards the settlement of its disputes. It established the Organization of African Unity (OAU) Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution, which was accompanied by vigorous efforts at the regional and subregional levels which no one can deny. Some of those efforts, indeed, preceded international efforts, as in Liberia and the Central African Republic. Furthermore, the Organization of African Unity and African leaders have played an active mediation role for States in crisis, which sends a clear signal of a major shift: that African States have overcome the excessive sensitivity that they displayed in the past with respect to intervening in each other's affairs. Personal mediation by African Heads of State has become a mainstay of crisis containment on our continent.

At a time when Africa is shouldering greater responsibility for the settlement of African questions, many regrettably detect international hesitancy with respect to the Security Council playing its natural role in some of these crises. The Secretary-General actually refers to this in paragraphs 29 and 30 of his report, where he concludes that setbacks suffered by the United Nations in Somalia and in the former Yugoslavia have brought about a kind of paralysis in the international community, of whose symptoms the Security Council has failed to rid itself to this day.

If the catastrophe of genocide in Rwanda provided a clear example of this hesitancy, the fact that the United Nations has thus far refrained from playing an effective role in Somalia, and its recent reluctance to undertake timely pre-emptive intervention in Congo (Brazzaville), make it clear that the international community in general and the Security Council in particular have not yet recovered from this paralysis.

From this, we might conclude that the report of the Secretary-General is fundamentally bold and honest in acknowledging the errors and failures that marked the Organization's past work. But it must be clearly said that mere acknowledgement of errors, without the intention and determination to prevent their repetition by adopting timely and practical measures, is not enough to guarantee optimal performance in the future.

I shall now make some remarks on specific topics, starting with Somalia. It is unacceptable to continue to turn a blind eye to what is taking place in Somalia. The United Nations should take the initiative to assess developments there and provide all possible help to facilitate the establishment of the peace which that country has been awaiting for so long. For its part, Egypt supports the efforts made by all parties, and will persist in these efforts to bring peace to Somalia, in coordination with the League of Arab States, the OAU and all other interested parties.

Another question to which the OAU gives top priority is the sanctions that have been imposed on Libya. The Security Council cannot maintain its position towards developments in the Lockerbie crisis, especially the recent decision of the International Court of Justice affirming the Court's jurisdiction in the case. While affirming the need to respect the norms of international law and the resolutions of the Security Council, Egypt expects the Council to give serious consideration to the options proposed by the OAU and the League of Arab States for resolving this crisis in a way that would ensure justice — especially as last month's open meeting of the Security Council on this matter made clear the desire of the international community to do this expeditiously.

In his report, the Secretary-General speaks of increasing the effectiveness of sanctions regimes and stopping the proliferation of arms as measures to ensure the success of international efforts at crisis containment. On the question of sanctions regimes, the report observes that greater use should be made of sanctions aimed at decision-makers in the targeted State, and that, when an arms embargo is imposed against a given State, other States should adopt national legislation to ensure stricter observance of the embargo by their citizens. Although both ideas are sound, the experience of implementing a number of sanctions regimes has proved how difficult it would be to put the first measure into practice.

The second proposal — relating to the adoption of national legislation — raises questions about the nature of the legal commitments arising from resolutions of the Security Council. In principle, all States are collectively committed under the Charter to comply with Security Council resolutions without the need for national legislation in each State to define the violation of their provisions as a criminal offence. Here it is worth noting that the present implementation of sanctions regimes is marred by a number of deficiencies which led the General Assembly to adopt by consensus resolution 51/242, entitled "Supplement to An Agenda for Peace", which included a detailed text on the question of sanctions regimes. That text could be the nucleus of a comprehensive reassessment of the entire question of sanctions regimes.

With respect to the importance of stopping the proliferation of arms, the report notes that Africa's compelling development interests require that a minimum of resources be diverted for military purposes, and that this could be achieved through transparency and confidence-building measures in the security and military fields, including support for the work of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. Despite the fact that we agree with the general objectives of such an orientation, we would like to point out that a large number of States have a firm position on the need to expand that Register to include also all weapons of mass destruction, in addition to military holdings and the procurement of weapons from national production.

All these subjects are of importance to Africa and to all other regions of the world. Here I would like to refer to the achievement actually made by Africa through the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the continent and the adoption in April 1996 of the Cairo Declaration, which contains a number of principles which reaffirm Africa's commitment to the maintenance of international peace and security.

Concerning the illegal inflow of arms to Africa by private international arms merchants, this is a matter of extreme gravity. Perhaps the political and military turmoil from which the States of the Great Lakes region suffered is the best evidence of the endless conflicts that this phenomenon can lead to. I wish here to express our full support for the Secretary-General's proposal relating to the necessity of confronting this phenomenon through compiling and publicizing information about it. The guidelines adopted by the Disarmament Commission two years ago on illegal trafficking in small and light arms, in addition to the work results of the panel of experts formed by the Secretary-General on this subject, may constitute a framework for strengthening the curb on this dangerous phenomenon.

The Secretary-General's report also deals with the importance of supporting regional and subregional initiatives as a way to promote collective action to contain crises. It reviewed the United Nations experience in Liberia and Sierra Leone in cooperation with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) as successful experiences which must be built upon.

But on another level, it must remain clear that the proper framework is to enable such regional arrangements to play an effective role which complements the efforts of the United Nations, as provided for in Chapter VIII of the Charter. It is necessary that the efforts of such arrangements not be used as a pretext for the Security Council to shirk its primary responsibilities or as a justification for the Council not to adopt the appropriate decisions at the appropriate times.

The Secretary-General's report also refers to the fact that civilians have become more than ever before the main target in most conflicts. Women and children are subjected to ruthless atrocities. In this regard, I would like to support the Secretary-General's call for the establishment of an international legal mechanism to hold warring parties accountable for their transgressions.

Yet the establishment of such a legal mechanism also necessitates an international machinery for follow-up and implementation. The failure of the international community to pursue and apprehend those indicted by the Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia yields a clear picture of sometimes giving political considerations primacy over legal considerations. This must be avoided in the establishment of the International Criminal Court.

Egypt agrees with the Secretary-General's reference in his report to the importance of the humanitarian dimension and the question of refugees in the African continent. The report has focused light on the problem of the Rwandese refugees in the Great Lakes region and on the need for the international community to act decisively and effectively to ensure protection and safety to all refugees and to keep their camps free of any military presence. That may be achieved through the establishment of an international mechanism to assist the Governments of host States in maintaining the security and neutrality of the refugee camps.

Within such efforts, it is also necessary that all other aspects of the problem of the refugees be dealt with, foremost among which is the provision of technical and humanitarian assistance to the host countries and mitigating the social and environmental impact on those countries. This is in addition to containing the negative effects on the security and stability of the host countries themselves.

These efforts must also include measures for the establishment of refugee camps away from the border areas, and rationalized coordination of the provision of humanitarian assistance between the United Nations organizations on the one hand, and the international relief organizations, on the other, and in particular the ICRC.

Concerning the reference in the Secretary-General's report to post-conflict peace-building and the ways of establishing durable peace through the promotion of economic growth, Egypt will make detailed comments on those subjects to the General Assembly, in its capacity as the organ responsible for the questions which fall outside the competence of the Security Council. In this regard, I wish to refer to the need to respect the specialization and competence of the various main organs of the United Nations within the framework of coordination and cooperation in dealing with multifaceted questions which are of mutual concern.

Africa is, at present, undergoing a stage of important historic evolution and of political, economic and social reform, a stage in which the values of democracy and respect for human rights are being consolidated. From that perspective, Africa yearns for the establishment of democracy on the international level as well. It is our hope that the process of reform of the United Nations, including the reform and restructuring of the Security Council, will lead ultimately to the achievement of justice, democracy and transparency in international transactions in the light of respect for the principle of sovereign equality.

Finally, I must express our agreement with the conclusions of the Secretary-General, contained in his report, on the need for the African States, the international community and the United Nations to discharge their respective responsibilities in order to give a new impetus to peace and development in Africa within a true and constructive partnership. The time is long past when the responsibility for producing change can be shifted onto the shoulders of others, or be totally relieved of such responsibilities. The commitment of the international community to Africa will be measured in deeds and not in words. Today we are in need of reactivating the existing initiatives, whether political or economic, of coordinating them and of presenting new ideas to deal with their shortcomings.

Finally, the delegation of Egypt would like to express its support for the Secretary-General's proposal that the Security Council reconvene at the ministerial level on a biennial basis and meet at the summit level every five years to assess the achievements aiming at establishing peace and political and economic stability in Africa for the good of its peoples and for their future.

We also look forward to tangible movement on the part of the Security Council and the General Assembly in the direction of the recommendations and proposals contained in this important report, following their thorough consideration.

The President: The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Argentina. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Petrella (Argentina) (*interpretation from Spanish*): Mr. President, I would like to pay a tribute to your great personal and professional qualities which we all deeply value. I would also like to congratulate the Ambassador of the Gambia for his work last month, and I wish most cordially to bid welcome to Mrs. Louise Fréchette, the Deputy Secretary-General, and wish her success in her sensitive job.

On behalf of the Argentine Government, we would like to thank the Secretary-General for his report. It gives us an important analysis of the historic and current sources of the conflicts in Africa and provides proposals to overcome them. We cannot remain indifferent to the challenge these proposals imply. We are morally duty-bound to act rapidly, generously and jointly.

We would have to be blind to deny the complexity of the African situations. We would have to be equally blind, and certainly unfair, not to appreciate the efforts of most African countries to strengthen their democracies, promote human rights and modernize their economies. Similarly, our assessment would be incomplete if we did not recall once again that Africa, like Latin America, was the scene of cruel conflicts during the cold war. These conflicts invariably left a legacy of backwardness and discouragement. Fortunately, this situation is changing.

In the economic area, tangible results have been achieved. Despite the heavy burden of external debt, in 1996 the African economy grew by more than 4 per cent, which was the highest growth rate in the last 20 years. Similarly, many African countries have successfully undertaken thorough reforms of their economies. The commitment entered into by seven African Heads of State and United States President Clinton in the Entebbe Declaration of 25 March 1998 bears eloquent testimony in this regard.

As the Minister for Foreign Affairs Guido di Tella stated in his letter to the President of the Security Council of 22 September 1997, the causes of conflict in Africa are wide-ranging and call for comprehensive responses. We concur with the premise, contained in the report of the Secretary-General, that these conflicts cannot be settled in an isolated fashion, but must be approached in a manner that comprehensively deals with peace and security, sustainable development, democracy and good governance. Argentina is fully prepared to do all in its power to assist in the implementation of the proposals of the Secretary-General and to cooperate with the African States.

These complex political and economic situations are not isolated realities, however. For its part, Argentina, after decades of political instability, has re-established democracy by making sacrifices. Therefore we understand and support the determination of the peoples and leaders of Africa to live in peace under the rule of law.

Argentina benefits from this trend towards change. It has not only strengthened its relations with many African countries but has also built up extremely fruitful trading arrangements. The 1997 figures show a 70 per cent increase in exports and a 50 per cent increase in imports as compared to 1996. This provides encouraging prospects for growth in trade.

Argentina has participated in and supported the African decolonization process since it began in the 1950s. It has established diplomatic, economic and cultural relations with the new independent States.

In the multilateral sphere, and in a field in which we have valuable experience, Argentina, together with interested African and American countries, has supported the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the South Atlantic. Further, as an active member in the Zone of Peace and Cooperation of the South Atlantic since it was established in 1986, and as the venue for the fifth ministerial meeting, Argentina, together with the 21 African States members of the Zone, is promoting the values of democracy, development, political pluralism and the defence of human rights.

In keeping with the aforementioned approach of linking peace and development, Argentina has been active in Africa and has tried to make contributions to the maintenance of peace, humanitarian assistance, good governance and technical cooperation for development.

Argentina has participated in peacekeeping operations in Angola, Mozambique and the Western

Sahara, and it continues to offer to provide training through the Buenos Aires peacekeepers training centre, as well as to exchange experiences with African countries regarding this delicate work.

In the area of humanitarian assistance, either through "White Helmets" missions or directly, Argentina has participated and will participate in the efforts to consolidate peace in Angola, Rwanda and Sierra Leone.

As for good governance, Argentina provided electoral observers for the first election in South Africa with free and universal suffrage, which put an end to apartheid, for the referendum on Eritrean self-determination and for the legislative elections in Algeria in June 1997. We stand ready to cooperate in the future when assistance is requested.

At the ministerial meeting of Security Council member States on 25 September 1997, Minister for Foreign Affairs di Tella reiterated Argentina's commitment to cooperate actively in the development of Africa. In this connection, Argentina is currently involved in the implementation of a series of programmes of cooperation with Africa. These range from training in farming and ranching, the eradication of diseases, computer science and State reform. Regarding the latter, from 4 to 5 May, within the framework of cooperation with the sub-Saharan countries of Africa, a seminar organized by Argentina will be held in Harare, Zimbabwe, in order to exchange experiences on the process of State reform and on bilateral cooperation.

I cannot conclude my statement without expressing the Argentine Republic's appreciation to Africa. Without the resolute and substantial commitment Africa has made to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, almost no changes in any such important areas such as decolonization, disarmament, the law of the sea, human rights and development — to mention just a few — could ever have been achieved by this Organization.

Finally, allow me to congratulate Mrs. Ogata and Mrs. Junod, who represent the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the International Committee of the Red Cross, for their valuable contributions to this open meeting of the Security Council. I would also like to congratulate the Secretariat staff who worked on the report of the Secretary-General.

The President: I thank the representative of Argentina for his kind words addressed to me, to my predecessor and to the Deputy Secretary-General.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Algeria. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Baali (Algeria) (*interpretation from French*): It is a genuine pleasure to see you, Sir, presiding over the work of the Security Council at a time when it is dealing with the sources of conflicts and the means to deal with them on my continent, since your country has endeavoured to understand it and has made patient efforts for its development.

I am therefore confident that, under your wise guidance, our deliberations today — and doubtless tonight as well — will serve to enrich, consolidate and refine the international community's understanding of African realities and of the considerable issues at stake, and that these deliberations will thus enable Africa to better shoulder its destiny and take its place in the world with dignity, independence and respect for its distinctiveness.

I would also like to express my great admiration and gratitude for the work carried out by your predecessor, the Ambassador of sisterly Gambia, who, with talent and modesty, guided the work of the Council during a particularly busy month.

By meeting at the level of foreign ministers precisely seven months ago to consider the timeliness of concerted international action to promote international peace and security in Africa, the Security Council clearly showed, for the first time, a proper understanding of the growing importance of our continent and of the significance of its contribution to the maintenance of international peace and security. At the same time it demonstrated its interest in Africa and its readiness to support the struggle for peace and development of the continent, which has been able to throw off colonialism without being able fully to rid itself of the difficult heritage bequeathed to it, which in many cases is the cause of the conflicts that tear it apart and of the rampant poverty.

In submitting to our Organization a report that is as complete as it is rigorous and supported by a clear analysis that is not complacent but fully oriented towards action, the Secretary-General — to whom I should like to pay a well-deserved tribute for the quality of the work he

has done and the courageous vision that underpins it — has met the enormous expectations placed on him by the international community and, above all, by the African continent, of which he is a worthy son.

This report must, as the Secretary-General intended, provoke a debate that is as broad as possible and that focuses on the causes of conflicts and the means of dealing with them, given that the numerous scourges from which Africa is suffering today are also affecting other continents. Africa is by no means the only region in the world confronted by serious difficulties, nor is it a continent characterized exclusively by chaos and poverty.

In fact, Africa today is a continent with many enormous challenges, but one which also has unlimited potential for development, democratization and the settlement of conflicts.

Numerous conflicts which are today battering the African continent undeniably stem from that dark period in its history when, dismembered by colonial appetites, it found itself torn apart and carved up, its landmarks broken and the delicate balances on which it had always depended irretrievably destroyed.

It is true that we are not here today to put colonialization on trial; we would obviously need considerably more than a few meetings of the Security Council to do that. Nor are we here to attribute all the problems of Africa to colonialization. However, it is important to recall here, for the sake of history and out of concern for objectivity, the huge responsibility borne by the former colonial Powers for the tragedies that are currently battering Africa. We must emphasize — and we should not forget this — that our peoples, in the wake of the independence that they acquired, often at the cost of great pain and blood, inherited territories where, since there was nothing, everything had to be built; where, by way of economic activity, there was only mining or the harvesting of produce; and where, therefore, there was a need to create the necessary infrastructures and open construction sites everywhere. Our peoples inherited territories where, despite pompous speeches on the civilizing mission of colonization, illiteracy exceeded 90 per cent and epidemics were rampant, and it was necessary to build schools and clinics. Because there was no State structure aside from that which allowed the colonial administration to maintain order and to pillage the resources of the country, it was necessary to create the State.

Furthermore, the former colonial Powers throughout the entire colonial period had, without regard for conscience or scruple, applied the old adage "divide and conquer", fomenting and fuelling rivalries between tribes and clans, in so doing thwarting any consolidation process for social cohesion and national sentiment. In the aftermath of independence — and up to the present — numerous African countries found themselves faced with the phenomenon of tribalism, which economic difficulties and political games have, it is true, sometimes exacerbated.

From the north to the south and from the east to the west, Africa therefore had to start from scratch. Throughout Africa there was a need to meet, rapidly, with limited means and in an international environment characterized by structural inequalities and ideological rivalries, the enormous needs of the people, establish economic policies, consolidate the social fabric and create a sense of belonging to a single nation while continually coping with numerous forms of interference and with the appetites of the Powers past and present.

Left to itself Africa, it should be recognized, resolutely shouldered its responsibilities, aware that above all it had to rely on its own means, regardless of how meagre they may have been, when faced with the enormous expectations of its peoples and the magnitude of the task to be accomplished.

Within the framework of the organization that was created in the wake of independence, and whose credo of unity presupposed the liberation of the continent, Africa mobilized itself in order to dedicate itself absolutely to, in the words of the Charter of the Organization of African Unity, "the total emancipation of the African territories which are still dependent" and to "eradicate all forms of colonialism from Africa".

Aware of the risks to future relations among the African States posed by borders that had sometimes been established contrary to common sense, our leaders decided then that, as from 1963, they would ratify the borders inherited from the colonial period, thereby demonstrating wisdom and responsibility and avoiding the danger of suddenly plunging the continent into bloody conflicts with immeasurable consequences.

Furthermore, our countries committed themselves to dialogue, to cooperation and to harmonizing their positions and policies. Today, concerted action among African countries is a true reality, evident in the regular

and frequent contacts at bilateral, regional and continental levels between heads of State and other African leaders, which attests to the will of Africans to seek by themselves, working together within the continent, ways and means of living together in greater harmony, stability and shared prosperity.

The establishment by the OAU of it Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution, whose role is now undisputed, illustrates this African awareness that there exists in Africa the political will, the means and the necessary human resources for the settlement of African problems, even if the continent will, for a long time to come, need financial and logistical support from the international community if it is to successfully complete its peace initiatives.

Finally convinced that without true economic, social and cultural development, and that without the progressive integration of the African economies Africa would not be saved, the African countries decided at Abuja to create an African economic community at both the regional and subregional levels, with countries grouped together within political and economic units so as to better pool their efforts and utilize their complementarities.

Parallel with this multilateral effort, the overwhelming majority of the countries of Africa committed themselves at the national level to a dual undertaking: the bold task of the democratization of societies and institutions, whose results can be seen today; and the no less ambitious undertaking to recover and restructure the economy, with the support of the Bretton Woods institutions, which are so far fulfilling all of their promises. This is attested to by the boost given to economic growth in numerous African countries, even if the social cost is often very high.

It is true that numerous complex problems remain, and there are substantial liabilities at the political and economic levels. The young shoots of democracy are still fragile and the economic gains precarious. But it is undeniable that today in Africa a democratic, free enterprise culture is developing and that this movement is growing daily and little by little becoming irreversible.

Africa, however, needs support in the huge effort that it has undertaken, and if it is to be supported effectively our distinctive features must be better understood and our priorities better grasped. It must be clear, therefore, that the cause of democratization and development in Africa will not be furthered by exerting pressure on African countries, attempting to impose on them social or developmental patterns which have been conceived elsewhere and which are irrelevant to the realities of Africa or by sometimes brandishing the scarecrow of sanctions.

Today, the men and women of Africa are determined to see the fulfilment of their will to establish democracy and respect for their rights throughout the continent; but they also know that these goals must be promoted at their own pace and in terms of their own specific national and local characteristics. At the same time, they are aware that if their economic and social rights — that is, their right to education, work, housing and health care — are not ensured at the same time, the concept of human rights will be no more than a hollow shell and a pious wish.

Consideration of the Secretary-General's report leads us to a number of preliminary ideas that I should like to share with the Council today. Other observations, and no doubt other proposals, will in due time be formulated in other bodies of our Organization.

We consider, first of all, that while the Security Council has the merit of having launched the debate on Africa, it is not, obviously, by its very mandate — which, as we know, is limited to the maintenance of international peace and security — the appropriate or sole framework for multifaceted, effective and concerted action on Africa.

The General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Bretton Woods institutions, which also have before them the report of the Secretary-General, as well as the Organization of African Unity (OAU), are in fact all called upon together to make their contribution to our reflective endeavour on the means to be implemented to assist Africa in meeting the challenges that confront it.

Indeed, without a genuine mobilization of the international financial institutions and the United Nations agencies, constructed around a real programme of support for Africa that would deal with the questions of investment and aid for development, as well as the problems of debt, commerce and trade and the negative effects of structural adjustment policies, any policy on Africa would be mere posturing. In his report, the Secretary-General has clearly and convincingly indicated the path to be followed, which we find both reasonable and realistic.

Regarding the handling of conflicts in Africa, it is absolutely essential that the United Nations cooperate in a close and ongoing manner with the OAU, which, better than any other organization, knows and understands African realities and sensibilities, and, in particular, with the Central Organ of the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution. This should not, however, mean that the international community — that is to say, the United Nations — should consider itself free from its obligations under the Charter.

In this context, and while recognizing the merit of the initiative undertaken by certain countries to strengthen African peacekeeping capabilities, it is imperative that the principles of multilateralism, universalism and transparency preside over the conception and implementation of this initiative. Here, the United Nations and the OAU, through its Mechanism, must be fully involved.

Hence, in this, as in any operation of preventive diplomacy or peacekeeping, the consent of the State involved, and thus its cooperation, are absolutely indispensable. This principle also applies to all situations in which the delivery of humanitarian assistance may seem necessary.

Regarding this last point in particular — in the light of the dangerous problems to which humanitarian aid is sometimes susceptible, which the Secretary-General has clearly highlighted, and because of the ways politicians or the media exploit such forms of aid — it seems to us of the greatest importance that all precautions be taken so that when such aid has been decided upon and accepted, it does indeed reach its beneficiaries, above all the most vulnerable ones, and that it does not exceed the strictly humanitarian framework in which it belongs. It must also be perfectly clear that humanitarian assistance must not be substituted for the prevention and settlement of conflicts, nor must it be used for propaganda purposes, nor serve as an alternative to development aid, whose positive effects on populations are far more lasting.

My other comment addresses the question of the proliferation of weapons. In proportion to its geographic area, Algeria is the country that devotes the smallest part of its gross domestic product to national defence; therefore, it obviously cannot fail to demonstrate its interest in the Secretary-General's recommendation to decrease expenditures for weapons and munitions to 1.5 per cent of the gross domestic product, even if that recommendation needs further clarification and refinement.

In the same context, Algeria can only welcome the proposal regarding the compilation, research and publication of information on the weapons trade, which fuels large-scale international crime and terrorism. To be effective, however, this proposal, which may be taken up by the new Department for Disarmament Affairs, must be part of a framework of effective and objective cooperation by the international community aimed at dismantling and neutralizing the networks of logistical support and supply of armaments that fuel the terrorist groups in their work of destabilization, destruction and death.

My last observation has to do with the policy of sanctions to which the Security Council has, with increasing frequency and uneven success, resorted over recent years.

In fact, while the embargo on the shipment of weapons to warring countries — as long as it is respected by all, which is rarely the case — can be an effective means of containing or preventing an armed conflict, economic sanctions often serve only to penalize civilian populations and can even lead to results that are diametrically opposed to those initially sought.

The serious abuses and excesses experienced in connection with sanctions regimes make it absolutely necessary for this kind of measure to be re-examined by the competent bodies of the United Nations, including the Security Council. Such reconsideration — obviously, going beyond the framework of Africa — must, beyond the recommendations of the Secretary-General, take up all aspects of the conditions for imposing and lifting sanctions, as well as the effects of sanctions on the civilian populations of the countries involved and of neighbouring countries, and must specifically define their objectives. Finally, the decision to impose sanctions must continue to lie solely with the Security Council.

The machinery to ensure that the recommendations of the Secretary-General are followed up could take the form of an ad hoc committee or working group that the Secretary-General would establish in cooperation with the OAU and that would be open to representatives of these two organizations and to those of the Bretton Woods institutions, the Economic Commission for Africa and the African Development Bank. The mandate of such a group would be to see to the implementation of agreed recommendations and to report to the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, which, because of their extensive competencies, seem to us to be in the best

position to act on the report of the follow-up mechanism. Obviously, the Security Council should also be kept informed.

As the intense deliberations of the Council have shown, the Secretary-General's report on Africa contains a valuable set of ideas and recommendations that will, we are convinced, contribute to a better understanding, knowledge and evaluation of the magnitude and complexity of the problems experienced today not only by Africa but also by the international community as a whole.

Many of these problems are also faced by other regions of the world and cry out to all of us for solidarity; many of them are complex and require our serious and thorough consideration both in this Council and in other organs and institutions, first and foremost among which is the OAU, which is bound to the United Nations by a long tradition of concerted action and cooperation, strikingly illustrated last year by a joint commitment for peace in the Great Lakes region.

What Africa expects from our Organization today is that for once it will go beyond making declarations of intent and expressions of solidarity and truly commit itself, side by side with Africa, through a programme of action that fully addresses our concerns and our particular features and that can meet our expectations and the historic challenges that face our continent every day.

The President: I thank the representative of Algeria for his kind words addressed to me and to my predecessor.

The next speaker is the representative of Ukraine. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Yel'chenko (Ukraine): This is the second time during the current session of the General Assembly that the Security Council is convening to consider the situation in Africa. In our view, it is yet further evidence that the United Nations continues to attach great importance to the problems in this part of the world. We therefore believe that this meeting of the Security Council is very timely.

Today, Africa has reached a very important turn in its historic development. In a number of African countries the economy has started to come out of the abyss, and the people seem to have realized the importance of gaining strength through unity. With the efforts of individual countries, the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and other regional organizations, some of the hot spots and conflicts on the continent have been eliminated or eased.

At the same time, there are still persistent problems which continue to impact negatively on the situation in many African countries, especially those which appear on the list of the world's poorest nations. As a whole, Africa remains marginalized in the present system of international economic relations. As a result, the situation in most of the continent is still characterized by striking poverty and underdevelopment. The United Nations, therefore, cannot and should not take the position of observer and must act adequately.

Years ago, the United Nations initiated the process of the decolonization of Africa, and it succeeded in those efforts. This Organization equally succeeded in eradicating the vicious system of apartheid in South Africa. Ukraine was proud to make its personal contribution to this noble endeavour as a member and Vice-Chairman of the United Nations Special Committee against Apartheid. As one of those who were honoured to be among the United Nations electoral observers in South Africa, I still remember those exciting moments at the end of April 1994.

Ukraine was also actively involved in the ongoing United Nations peacekeeping operation in Angola, as well as in some humanitarian relief transportation missions to other parts of Africa.

Today, the United Nations should help Africa in its just striving for progress and sustainable development by ensuring stability and peace on this continent.

In the area of socio-economic assistance to Africa, the international community has already developed a number of specific programmes, including the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative for Africa, which was launched by the Secretary-General. However, we believe that external assistance should complement rather than replace the steps to be taken by African States themselves. In this respect, we welcome with hope and optimism the decisions adopted at the Entebbe summit during the recent visit of President Clinton to Africa. It is very important that its participants and the United States commit themselves to a series of measures aimed at speeding up Africa's transformation and to facilitate its full integration into the global economy.

Despite the positive developments I have just referred to, political instability and serious retreats from

democracy are still preventing certain African countries from moving forward. In some of them, vast movements of refugees and displaced persons continue to be an alarming factor which contributes to political instability. In addition, internal conflicts are threatening the very survival of those countries. Therefore, we strongly believe that the issues of peace, security and stability and the problems of economic development of Africa should be addressed simultaneously, as they are closely interrelated.

The United Nations should be ready to meet those challenges through its peacekeeping operations, good offices missions and emergency relief programmes. At the same time, broader international efforts, such as the imposition of sanctions, if necessary, can succeed only if they are complemented by genuine cooperation and support on the part of the countries of the region.

In our view, the continuing leading role in ensuring such cooperation should be played by the Organization of African Unity. It is also imperative that the international community enhance its political support for that organization, as well as the material and technical support required to improve its capabilities in resolving the problems and conflict situations within the African framework.

In past years we have witnessed positive examples of preventive and peacekeeping efforts undertaken by subregional organizations in southern Africa, West Africa and the Horn of Africa. Therefore, we support the implementation of the recommendation contained in the Secretary-General's report to improve coordination and the exchange of information between the United Nations and these organizations.

Given the scope of a number of recommendations in the Secretary-General's report, our delegation fully supports the idea of presenting it to the General Assembly and other bodies of the United Nations system, as well as to respective humanitarian organizations.

Finally, I would like to stress that Ukraine approaches the issue of cooperation with Africa primarily from the position of developing a mutually beneficial partnership. From the very first days of its regained independence, Ukraine, keeping in view the long-standing traditions and history of its relations with many African countries, proposed to develop such cooperation at a qualitatively new level. We are only at the initial stage of this promising cooperation, and I take this opportunity to encourage interested African States to embark on this undertaking.

In conclusion, I wish to express our sincere hope that the difficulties which Africa is facing today will eventually be overcome and that this continent will turn into a region of political stability and social and economic progress. It is the obligation of all Member States of this world Organization to help Africa to realize this goal.

The President: The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Morocco. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Snoussi (Morocco) (*interpretation from French*): Allow me, first of all, to express to you Sir, my country's deep satisfaction upon seeing you preside over the Security Council, and to extend our congratulations to your predecessor, Mr. Abdoulie Sallah, for the very efficient manner in which he conducted the work of the Council.

The Kingdom of Morocco cannot but welcome the holding of today's meeting concerning a continent of which we are a part. My country wishes to take this opportunity to applaud the tireless efforts made by the current President of the Security Council, Japan, with regard to the development and prosperity of the African economies, particularly through the Tokyo International Conference on African Development.

The meeting of the Security Council at the level of Ministers for Foreign Affairs on 25 September 1997, convened on the initiative of the United States and Japan to examine the issue of joint international action to promote peace and security in Africa, was a welcome and necessary initiative. Indeed, it allowed us finally to draw the attention of the international community to the ills and the tragic situation currently being experienced by our continent.

The report of the Secretary-General, which we welcome, outlines and presents the true problems, principal causes and realistic and achievable remedies for meeting the numerous problems faced by African countries and promoting peace and sustainable development in Africa.

As everyone knows, despite notable progress achieved by some African countries in the economic and political areas, the scope and intensity of armed conflicts in the continent remain the subject of deep concern to the international community. The 30 wars which have ravaged Africa since 1970 have caused hundreds of thousands of deaths and millions of refugees and

displaced persons and have compromised all the efforts made by Africa to ensure peace, stability and prosperity.

The tragic state of affairs on the African continent is certainly the foremost among those questions calling on the international community to pool its efforts in the search for effective and practical solutions for improving the grave economic, social and humanitarian situation on our continent, which has been exacerbated by such tragedies as civil wars, rampant epidemics and disease, and desertification, not to mention the refugee problem and its related difficulties.

With your permission, Mr. President, a question comes to mind: Is it not time for us to establish, together, clear and realistic standards for defining the meaning of the word "genocide"? These standards would undoubtedly help us to avoid characterizing as genocide a conflict that claims 300 victims in one region, while, in another part of the world — in this case, Africa — we allow 300,000 victims to fall before crying genocide.

Morocco, as a part of Africa and through its age-old and diverse links to the other countries of the continent, is aware of the responsibilities arising from that connection and expresses its deep concern over the degeneration of the political and socio-economic situation in several regions of the continent.

With regard to security and stability, Morocco has followed with real concern the emergence and longevity of hotbeds of tension in certain African regions and reaffirms its determination to join and support the efforts of the international community, and the United Nations in particular, to find adequate and lasting solutions to these crises.

With respect to North Africa, it seems undeniable to us that a situation such as that brought about by the Lockerbie affair cannot be passed over in silence while we speak today about peace, security and stability in Africa. The regional organizations — Arab, Islamic, African and non-aligned — have all taken a position in favour of a settlement that we feel is truly just and truly fair. In doing so, they have yet again demonstrated and strengthened the notion that negotiation is superior to sanctions and other coercive measures.

The precarious economic situation in Africa continues to preoccupy the international community. This situation is particularly evident in the continent's feeble participation in international trade, its increased debt burden, a chronic deficit in its infrastructures, the highly advanced degeneration of its social and health conditions, and the paucity of foreign investment despite the massive structural reforms undertaken by these countries.

In this regard, Morocco welcomed with great pleasure Portugal's initiative to convene a Euro-African summit to consider and seek appropriate solutions to the situation on our continent. This initiative reflects the European Union's growing awareness of Africa. In this respect, Morocco has proposed a ministerial meeting to prepare for the summit. Moreover, we welcome the United Nations initiative for Africa and believe it imperative that the appropriate conditions for its success be ensured through the provision of the necessary financial and technical support by the United Nations and the international community.

Morocco can only support the Secretary-General's principal recommendations on Africa, particularly those that call for establishing structural adjustment programmes that are fully compatible with peace, in order to ensure that the assistance is structured to focus on the areas where it will be most effective and to reduce the dependence of the African countries.

Furthermore, Morocco fully endorses the idea that the creditors should consider entirely forgiving the debt of the poorest countries of Africa and that the most industrialized countries entertain the possibility of eliminating trade barriers against African products and ensure that the larger part of the resources provided for assistance are effectively spent in Africa.

On the subject of development assistance, Morocco, as was noted by its sovereign, His Majesty King Hassan II, was the first, at the Ministerial Meeting of the Uruguay Round held in Marrakesh in 1994, to call for the launching of a "Marshall Plan" for Africa and for an intensification of international efforts to help the African States to develop their economies and strengthen their integration into the world economy.

But an undertaking of such scope can succeed only if the international community, in a massive show of solidarity, agrees to make an enormous contribution in order to allow the African continent to become a true partner and to contribute, in its turn, to overall development. The United States certainly did so following the Second World War. Our community, comprising all the developed national entities, is undoubtedly more prosperous and stronger. It, too, could

do so, but will it agree to make such a sacrifice to save Africa? That would require a new spirit, a new philosophy on the part of the industrialized countries, and the will to leave old notions and outmoded strategies behind.

Africa did not choose to solve its problems by incessant wars. Africa certainly did not choose, moreover, to be underdeveloped, nor did it choose to be stricken by waves of epidemics and natural disasters. Africa needs to be helped to avoid the temptation of soliciting help from the rich and so that its children might no longer be siphoned off by humiliating and futile emigrations.

In convening this special meeting devoted to Africa, the Security Council is sending our continent a reassuring signal full of hope. May that signal be followed by concrete action to make up the delays and bring us in step with the twenty-first century.

Allow me to conclude by saying that a comprehensive effort should be made to give impetus to Africa's renewed quest for peace and greater prosperity. As the Secretary-General emphasized, Africa needs realistic and achievable recommendations for reducing or even ending conflicts in the long run.

We certainly do not need to keep rehashing the misdeeds of colonialism, but in order to advance we must remember them. We must remember that colonialism, even in its simplest form, bequeathed us a fragile economy and, sometimes, structures and systems that, undeniably, long hindered our efforts towards development.

A clear understanding of the challenge, the political will to respond to it and the resources necessary to an appropriate response are the three bases for any improvement in Africa's situation. The will exists and Africa has made enormous efforts to prepare the social and political environment necessary to development. Our very tangible progress towards democracy makes us highly optimistic; increased solidarity and a stronger desire to succeed will be the best guarantees for our triumph.

The President: I thank the representative of Morocco for the kind words he addressed to me and to my predecessor.

The next speaker is the representative of Norway. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Kolby (Norway): Norway has a strong commitment to the African continent. We therefore welcome and commend the Secretary-General's report on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa. We support the broad and holistic approach of the report and the recommendations it contains, and we appreciate this opportunity to discuss these issues in an open meeting of the Security Council.

Norway shares the view that conflict prevention, including early warning and action, and peace-building are preconditions for lasting peace in Africa. A development perspective is, however, important. There can be no development without peace and no peace without development. The reduction of poverty is a necessary condition for realistically promoting human rights, stability and security. The Norwegian development cooperation programmes with African countries have also increasingly addressed questions of governance, democracy-building and human rights, factors which are crucial in order to prevent conflicts from erupting. We also view humanitarian aid in close conjunction with efforts to promote peace and prevent conflict, and we support efforts to enhance African peacekeeping capacity.

The Secretary-General rightly emphasizes the responsibility of African countries themselves for developments in Africa. We welcome the involvement of the Organization of African Unity and subregional organizations in all stages of conflict resolution and in enhancing the capacity for peacekeeping operations. Improving and enhancing African capacity with regard to peacekeeping operations and conflict prevention will contribute to the stability of the continent. The role of the international community should primarily be to strengthen and support the efforts and initiatives taken by the African countries themselves. This is part of the responsibility of the international community, and we are looking forward to cooperating with African countries and others under the aegis of the United Nations.

Norway fully concurs with the Secretary-General's identification of three critical factors in addressing the security challenges facing Africa: the need for a clear understanding of the causes underlying conflicts, the political will to respond and the need for adequate resources to address the challenges.

Poverty reduction represents one of the most urgent challenges in Africa. Poverty reduction is crucial in terms of economic development, political stability and regional

and global security. It is also in itself a realization of some of the most fundamental human rights in the social and economic area. To succeed in this endeavour, we believe that the following factors must be emphasized. First, the international trend of reduced disbursements of development assistance must be reversed. There should be, *inter alia*, an increase in the aid provided to least developed countries. Secondly, increased resources must be channelled to the social sectors, specifically to education and health. And thirdly, the focus should be on the poor segments of the population.

Economic development is fundamental in achieving poverty reduction. The building of local capacity, which is a central theme in the Secretary-General's report, is crucial for economic development, and we see the untying of aid as a vital step towards facilitating the growth of the private sector in African countries.

My Government is currently working on a plan to increase Norwegian development assistance to 1 per cent of our gross domestic product by the year 2001. Special emphasis will be placed on increased cooperation with African countries, on poverty alleviation, on improved delivery of social services and on debt reduction. Norway has for a long time strongly advocated international solutions to the serious debt burden of the heavily indebted poor countries, and we have focused on programmes which can provide efficient debt relief operations. We regard the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Debt (HIPC) Initiative as an important initiative and a milestone in the efforts by the international community to ease the debt burden of the poorest and most indebted countries. The Norwegian Government is now finalizing a plan for debt reduction for the developing countries.

Initiatives to stop the unlawful use and excessive accumulation of small arms ought to be an integral part of domestic as well as foreign policy. In some countries, support is needed to restructure the national security sector and train security personnel. Efforts to collect and destroy small arms after conflicts also merit our active support. The proposal by Mali to establish a moratorium on small arms for West African countries is a very encouraging one, and we were pleased to be able to participate in thorough discussions of this proposal at a recent seminar in Oslo. We join the Secretary-General in urging all African countries to participate in the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms.

Landmines constitute a serious obstacle to post-conflict reconstruction. We urge all Member countries to sign and ratify the Ottawa Convention. We join others in emphasizing strongly the need for adequate resources for mine-clearing activities. Norway has already stated its intention to contribute $120 million over the next five years to this task.

The development efforts of many African countries are currently being hampered by the lack of adequate coordination among donors. Sometimes one may actually do more harm than good. Better coordination at the country level is crucial, among donors and between donors and the African countries. This implies that everyone should be prepared to lower their own flags for the sake of better results in our development efforts.

Such coordination is also crucial in responding to conflict situations in order to harmonize policies and actions, to avoid the possible pitfalls of a proliferation of mediation efforts and, in cases where sanctions have been imposed by the international community, to improve their effectiveness. In this respect we welcome the recommendation that sanctions should be better targeted at decision makers. This is in line with a holistic human rights perspective, where the effects on social, economic and cultural rights are also duly taken into account.

Finally, I join the Secretary-General in the hope that the report will mark a new beginning in the relationship between the United Nations and Africa. Norway strongly supports the call for continuous involvement by the world community in the development and security of Africa. Hopefully, such a partnership will contribute to the creation of a true African renaissance.

The President: The next speaker is the representative of Bangladesh. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Chowdhury (Bangladesh): Bangladesh participates in this debate in the Security Council with a great sense of pride and commitment: pride, because of the indomitable spirit of the African people, which has energized us always, and commitment because we believe in the cause of peace and development in Africa.

It is in this perspective that Bangladesh wholeheartedly welcomes the report of the Secretary-General contained in document S/1998/318 on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa. We note with particular appreciation the outlining of some initiatives by the Secretary-General which are to be pursued both

within Africa and by the international community with a view to eliminating the roots of conflict through a variety of sustained economic and social measures.

We express our satisfaction at the Security Council's initiative to address an issue of such great import for international peace, security and development. In this connection, we note that the Secretary-General has submitted this report both to the Security Council and to the General Assembly, and that he intends to involve the United Nations system, including the Bretton Woods institutions, in the formulation and implementation of a comprehensive set of measures to bring Africa out of the spiral of conflict and set it on the road to stability and sustained and equitable growth. This context is important to my delegation.

We fully share the view expressed by the Secretary-General that the prevention of conflict begins and ends with the promotion of human security and human development. As in other places, conflicts in Africa have their roots in social discrimination, economic deprivation and lack of accountability in the use of political power. At the same time, we believe that the colonial legacy and its continuation in different forms and manifestations are still at work to prevent social and political assimilation and equitable distribution of resources; this foments tension and conflict within and among nations. There is little justification for lamenting human and material losses in conflicts in Africa and elsewhere when the policies of yesteryear contributed to creating irreparable socio-economic and political divisions in every society, feeding today's violence.

Prevention is always better than cure. The Secretary-General has reaffirmed this idea once again in the context of the African situation. We share his conviction and therefore support his suggestion that the international community should encourage the concerned Governments to seek a political solution of a conflict situation, working through special mediators and commissioners. We also find interesting his suggestions in part III of the report for addressing threats to peace and security in Africa. We note in particular his emphasis on the need to seek political solutions to disputes by utilizing the resources of regional organizations such as the Organization of African Unity (OAU) under the direction of the United Nations; this is worth considering.

We would, however, like to reiterate our view that while we welcome the significant role of regional organizations in peacekeeping and peacemaking activities, the primary responsibility of the United Nations in this regard should not be compromised in any way. In this context, we would also be happy to know how effectively the newly created Executive Committee on Peace and Security is contributing towards harmonizing United Nations efforts to promote the Organization's goals in this area.

On sanctions, we believe that further study needs to be undertaken to make these more focused and effective in achieving the desired objective without too much collateral damage. In this connection, suggestions put forward by the Secretary-General are useful and could be studied in the context of General Assembly resolution 51/242, entitled "Supplement to an Agenda for Peace".

Peacekeeping remains an essential tool in the hands of the United Nations to address conflict situations. Bangladesh, as a leading contributor to peacekeeping efforts of the Organization, has had its share of service in African and other missions. We also concur with the view that peacekeeping is becoming increasingly complex, with additional responsibilities being added to its mandate. While we note this emerging trend in peacekeeping efforts, we believe that due care should be taken not to load peacekeeping missions with too much responsibility beyond their agreed jurisdiction. Post-conflict peace-building efforts should be calibrated carefully, taking into consideration the distinctive roles of the various organs and agencies of the United Nations in this function. In particular, the key role of the General Assembly in the formulation of post-conflict peace-building activities needs to be recognized. We believe that an overwhelming consensus exists on this point.

Violations of humanitarian law and of the sanctity of the human person, particularly abuses of the rights of women and children during a conflict, are a major problem, and we are happy to see the attention paid by the Secretary-General to these aspects in his report. We should like to commend him for appointing a Special Representative for children in armed conflict with a view to keeping a sustained focus on this issue. We fully support the idea of making children a "zone of peace" during any conflict. On human rights abuses in conflict situations, we note the Secretary-General's proposal to fund all special human rights missions from assessed contributions to the Organization. We support the idea that the rights of all civilians, including relief workers, in situations of armed conflict should be respected and protected.

A fair degree of consensus exists these days on the idea that Governments should be politically accountable and socially responsible, as well as pro-people, based on the rule of law and respect for the dignity of the human person. In this context, we find merit in the Secretary-General's suggestions in his report on various aspects of good governance. We believe that non-governmental organizations can play a complementary role to support efforts to make Governments more accountable and responsive.

We also share the view expressed by the Secretary-General that development is a human right and is central to the prospects for reducing conflict in Africa. Indeed, we believe that lack of development is the source of all conflicts in Africa and that the international community therefore needs to encourage African countries to focus on development, with particular emphasis on investing in the social sector. As the Secretary-General has said, investment in human resources must be recognized not merely as a byproduct of economic growth but as a driving force for development. It is also an essential component of eliminating poverty, which feeds all discontent and hatred. Here, we believe that investment in the education of girls has the most effective return. Indeed, we have seen in our country how investment in women's and girls' education and empowerment through an elaborate network of microcredit and other support programmes has transformed them into socially productive resources. We are encouraged to note that during the first ever high-level meeting between the Economic and Social Council and the Bretton Woods institutions, held last Saturday here at United Nations Headquarters, the benefit of social investment as an essential development tool emerged as a common theme among the participants.

No domestic efforts can be successful in the developing countries, in Africa in particular, unless these are matched by equally robust and positive international support. In this context, my delegation fully supports the Secretary-General's call for at least 50 per cent of donor aid to Africa to be spent there. Likewise, we endorse the Secretary-General's call to all bilateral creditors to convert all their remaining bilateral debt owed by the poorest African countries into grants.

Besides debt support, market access to products from the less developed African countries is also important, and in this connection we support the idea of enhanced and guaranteed access to developed country markets as well as improved regional South-South cooperation. Indeed, relatively advanced neighbouring countries could consider providing market access to products from the African least developed countries on a non-reciprocal basis. Regional and subregional integration can also help overcome single-country handicaps in economic activities. The Secretary-General's suggestions in this regard deserve serious consideration.

Bangladesh's commitment to the well-being of our brothers and sisters in Africa is rooted in a number of compelling factors. Bangladesh has been a major contributor in almost all peacekeeping and peacemaking efforts of the United Nations in the African continent. We have together pursued a similar line of struggle for our independence and still share similar values of life and outlook about the contemporary global situation. On the economic front, most of the African countries are the members of the group known as the least developed countries (LDCs), of which Bangladesh has the honour to serve as the coordinator. We therefore share common experience and a common goal in our struggle to foster a stable social order, economic emancipation and political freedom to make life meaningful to our peoples. Let me reaffirm our commitment to see a conflict-free Africa contributing to global peace, security and development in a meaningful way.

The President: The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Pakistan. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Kamal (Pakistan): Mr. President, since this is the first time I am addressing the Security Council under your presidency, allow me to congratulate you on your assumption of this important post and to express the deep admiration of Pakistan for the consistent and committed manner and the committed interest and support which your country, Japan, has always extended to Africa and to African causes.

The participation by a large number of delegations in today's debate on Africa amply indicates the concern of the international community over the prevailing situation in the African region. The gravity of the situation is also reflected by the fact that over 60 per cent of the issues currently under active consideration by the Security Council relate to Africa.

In his report the Secretary General has made a sincere effort to identify the causes of the conflicts in the African region. The report lists an array of political, historical, socio-economic and cultural reasons for these seemingly unending conflicts. An earnest effort has been

made to suggest plausible solutions to these conflicts, and they are duly appreciated.

The overriding factor for the sad state of affairs in Africa has been, and is, the all-pervasive and abject poverty in the continent. Poverty is deprivation. Deprivation leads to frustration. And frustration engenders instability and conflict.

The international community should therefore concentrate its efforts on poverty eradication in Africa. What is required is liberal technical and financial support to augment its human resource development and to build and enlarge its essential infrastructure for result-oriented socio-economic development. Despite our own financial difficulties, Pakistan has implemented a 250 million rupee Technical Assistance Programme for Africa since the early 1980s. Under this Programme, we are extending training facilities to young professionals from African countries in diverse fields.

Without attaining the objective of sustainable development, the possibilities of achieving durable solutions to conflicts in Africa would remain as elusive as ever. Large-scale migration of populations, recurrence of epidemics and increasing environmental degradation underscore the importance of a more focused attention on developmental issues in the region.

Africa remains among the poorest regions in the world. It lacks both in human resource development and material resources. Its poverty is further exacerbated by pressures of debt servicing, deteriorating terms of trade, declining official development assistance, falling commodity prices, increasing protectionism in developed countries and negative effects of structural adjustment arrangements.

At present the total debt of Africa is around $350 billion. The African countries are unlikely to be able to pay back this huge amount through indigenous resources. This high level of indebtedness, coupled with the lack of infrastructural back-up, is a major impediment to the flow of private investments in Africa, which are of paramount importance to achieve sustained economic growth and sustainable development of the region. We therefore fully support the Secretary-General's appeal to the donor community and the international financial institutions to take immediate steps to reduce Africa's debt burden.

We believe that explicit debt reductions would have a more positive impact on the economies of the countries of the region than the routine ritual of debt rescheduling. We hope that creditors will respond positively to the appeal and agree to convert all the remaining bilateral debt of the poorest African countries into grants.

We also support the call to the donor countries to ensure that at least 50 per cent of their aid to Africa is spent in the region. This would effectively curtail the reverse flow of resources from poor African countries to rich donor countries.

Africa deserves the international community's full support to break out of the vicious circle of poverty and underdevelopment. It needs a supportive international economic environment, including priority access to markets for its exports and preferential access to technology.

The potential benefits of the information revolution for Africa cannot be overemphasized. A wealth of ideas and practical proposals for the eradication of poverty, disease and hunger has been developed and is readily available. There is an abundance of models and projects which demonstrate the success of various developmental approaches. The African countries can benefit from this wealth of knowledge according to their own specific needs. With the help of the United Nations funds and programmes all this data could be consolidated into an integrated information system and then progressively linked to an exclusive Africa help database.

As for the United Nations efforts towards conflict resolution and peacekeeping in Africa, the response to incipient crises and even full-blown tragedies has been slow in the past. The massacre of over half a million people in Rwanda is a painful reminder of this sluggish response. The United Nations needs to prepare itself fully for any future emergencies. The best course to prepare for such eventualities would be to develop an efficient early warning system and to build appropriate capacities to respond effectively to simmering crises in Africa and in other parts of the world.

The problems faced by the African region are colossal. These require earnest efforts for political solutions and liberal support for economic development. We hope that this debate will constructively contribute to developing comprehensive responses to the multidimensional problems being faced by the African region. Let us join hands to attain this long elusive objective.

The President: I thank the representative of Pakistan for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Indonesia. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Effendi (Indonesia): At the outset, the Indonesian delegation would like to express its appreciation to you, Mr. President, and the members of the Council for convening this meeting at a critical juncture for the African continent. Our deliberations today reflect the utmost importance that the international community accords to issues concerning Africa, particularly those relating to security and economic and social development. It provides a unique opportunity to take stock of the significant achievements and progress made by the African people over the last few years and concurrently to focus attention on the need for enhanced international cooperation to establish on the continent a partnership with the rest of the world based on mutual benefit and prosperity.

Before proceeding further, I should like to express our sincere gratitude to the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report, entitled "The causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa", which in paragraph 107 contains recommendations and proposals

> "to reduce conflict and in time help to build a strong and durable peace".

It is expected to generate action from the international community to establish peace and prosperity in Africa. Equally important is that it envisions intensified cooperation and closer coordination between the United Nations and regional organizations in Africa, thus providing greater momentum for the realization of stability and sustainable development for Africa and its people.

During the past years the African continent has undergone profound change and transition. Colonization and apartheid have successfully been relegated to the dark chapter of history. We rejoiced when Namibia succeeded in its long struggle for independence and apartheid was forever eradicated in South Africa, thereby bolstering hopes and optimism that a new era was unfolding on the continent. Today, at the threshold of the next millennium, Africa stands closer to attaining its goal of stable peace and economic prosperity. It is therefore gratifying to note in the introduction to the report of the Secretary-General that

> "Africa as a whole has begun to make significant economic and political progress" and "efforts to break with the patterns of the past are at last beginning to succeed."

As a vast continent with abundant natural resources and industrious people, Africa holds great untapped potential for development and is a vital force to be reckoned with in the global markets.

For such prosperity to flourish and grow there must be an environment of peace and security. In this context, my delegation views with concern the conflicts taking place in some parts of Africa that have torn the very fabric of its society, resulting in immense suffering for its people. It is our fervent hope that the long and relentless efforts of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the United Nations will bring the concerned parties together to settle their disputes in a peaceful and amicable manner through dialogue and negotiations. We therefore commend the efforts of the OAU, which has long been at the helm of all concerted endeavours to resolve conflicts through peaceful means. Over the past three decades, the OAU has continued to be the leading and most indispensable organization through which the African nations and their peoples have been able to address crisis situations. There is much that the OAU and the United Nations can achieve when both Organizations work in concert to remove obstacles endangering the peace and thereby facilitate the peace process. We believe that such a partnership of cooperation can be built within the framework of Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations.

In this regard we fully concur with the Secretary-General's observation that the international community has a crucial role to play in nurturing the ongoing peace process by extending assistance to provide short-term stability and providing various inducements while the parties to the conflict work towards long-term reconciliation and the reconstruction of their societies. At the same time, my delegation underscores the importance of the African countries, like all other countries, being masters of their own destiny in choosing the road map to development that is fully in accord with the sacrosanct principles of respect for the sovereignty of nations and strict adherence to the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of other States.

It is clearly evident that to succeed in building frameworks for enduring peace and stability on the African continent, the international community must work

together with the African countries to strengthen the continent's social and economic foundations. Abject poverty, illiteracy and hunger only breed despair and resentment. Only through increased economic development and generalized improvement in standards of living will people gain a vested interest in working towards peaceful resolutions of their differences. It is no longer sufficient for the international community to convene and merely express empathy and support for the African countries without providing concrete contributions. If indeed there is a genuine desire to avoid the need for emergency humanitarian assistance or to avoid costly peacekeeping and peacemaking operations — as well as to give meaning to the expressions of concern so often voiced — then comprehensive, concerted and concrete action on economic development cooperation must be taken. Anything less will result in a loss of credibility.

In that connection, the initiative announced by the Secretary-General, in collaboration with the Secretary-General of the OAU, to promote large-scale long-term investment in growth-promoting sectors in Africa is a positive and constructive step forward. Clearly, new efforts need to be made to attract foreign direct investment in Africa, which accounted for less than 5 per cent of the overall direct investment in the developing countries in 1996. Those African countries that have, in the framework of their economic reform programmes, worked vigorously to establish a favourable climate for attracting private, domestic and foreign direct investment should receive a positive response and serve as models for replication.

At the same time, steps must be taken by the developed countries to increase market access for African exports through a reduction of trade barriers. As the sustained economic growth of the continent will depend largely on export-led growth, we believe it appropriate for the World Trade Organization to closely monitor the critical situation and to work with all concerned to alleviate all obstacles. In the near term, the continuing importance of official development assistance, particularly in meeting the resource requirements of the low-income countries, needs to be strongly underscored. The global decline in official development assistance, as market forces are increasingly left as the determining factor, must be reversed. A constructive global partnership to support the development efforts of the developing countries, particularly the least developed, needs to be re-established. This is in the interests of all members of the international community, not only aid-recipient countries. It is no longer acceptable for developing countries to continually call for official development assistance commitments to be fulfilled, only to be ignored. We must get off that treadmill and all take a serious look at the benefits of development aid and begin to restore the flow of international development assistance.

Concurrently, vigorous efforts must be taken to finally resolve the unsustainable debt burdens of the African countries. It is a travesty for the African countries to continue to pay more than 17 per cent of their total export earnings to donors and commercial lenders while many struggle to meet the most basic needs of their people. Maintaining the status quo is unacceptable. Indonesia therefore supports the OAU's call for an international agreement to clear the debt stock of the poorest countries in Africa. This would represent an important step in the effort to revitalize the economic performance of these countries and put them back on the path of growth. Likewise, we see merit in the proposal for creditor countries to convert into grants the remaining official bilateral debt of the poorest countries, and for financial institutions to significantly ease and speed access to facilities, as well as to provide sufficient resources for economic growth and social development for the heavily indebted poor nations.

South-South cooperation also holds promise for supporting the development objectives in Africa, as many developing countries are clearly in a position to provide assistance and capacity-building. Such assistance could be developed in the areas of trade promotion and strengthening food production and distribution, to name but a few. This also provides a good opportunity to draw on the experiences of the African countries and to determine priorities. The countries of the South can ill afford to miss this opportunity to act in solidarity and to contribute to lasting solutions to their common problems.

In the long and arduous struggle for political freedom, Africa has shown great resilience and courage. So, too, at the present time, the spirit of Africa can break the chains of underdevelopment, and Africa can gain its rightful place as a peaceful, harmonious and prosperous continent. But in this era of interdependence and globalization it cannot go it alone. Africa deserves the attention of the international community. There is therefore an urgent need for action on the part of the United Nations and the international community. In this respect, we commend the report of the Secretary-General, which is a step in the right direction. Let us therefore reaffirm our commitment to the African nations to secure lasting peace and security and promote in earnest international cooperation in which strong

economies can be built anew to sustain the peoples of Africa in a self-reliant and sustainable manner. It is only through our collective efforts that the true destiny of this great continent can be successfully fulfilled.

As for Indonesia, although it, too, is a developing country with economic problems of its own, it is firmly committed to assisting its partners in Africa in achieving their vision of a peaceful and prosperous Africa. Indonesia and African countries have long enjoyed close and fraternal relations, having their roots in the distant past, the seeds of which were first sown in Bandung in 1955. That historic forum was the precursor to the establishment of the Non-Aligned Movement, which charted the way not only for Asia and Africa but also for the future of mankind as a whole. The non-aligned countries have since then adopted policies through which they have assiduously sought to promote and consolidate their hard-won independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity and the social and economic uplift of their peoples. These remain as valid today as they were more than four decades ago.

Indonesia's commitment to its brothers and sisters in Africa over the past few years is reflected in, among other things, Indonesia's support of African development during its chairmanship of the Non-Aligned Movement, the convening in Indonesia of the Asia-Africa Forum, our participation in such forums as the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF) and support for the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa, as well the strong bilateral cooperation that Indonesia maintains in various parts of the continent. Next year Indonesia will convene a summit-level meeting on South-South cooperation, to be held in Jakarta. It is our hope that such a summit-level meeting will result in a clear and determined path for the South into the twenty-first century, from which it can meet the challenges of globalization and emerge from the socio-economic exclusion of the past.

The President: The next speaker is the representative of India. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Pal (India): It is appropriate that this meeting is taking place under your presidency, Sir, given Japan's interest in African affairs and your personal commitment to this cause.

We read the Secretary-General's superb report with very great interest. It was not an easy task that the Security Council set the Secretary-General last September, and perhaps the questions the Council posed, and the fact that it was the Council that posed them, presupposed the answers. The Council acts only when there is a grave threat to international peace and security, and if it asks the Secretary-General to produce a report on the causes of conflict in Africa, it seems to follow that Africa must be peculiarly prone to conflict, that there are special reasons why Africa suffers from violence and that conflict is its defining characteristic. But are these assumptions correct? One of the great minds of this century, Octavio Paz, who died earlier this week, wrote some lines about a country which, modified, apply equally well to Africa: in general, the world has not looked for Africa in Africa; it has looked for its obsessions, enthusiasms, phobias, hopes, interests — and these are what it has found.

In some ways, nothing has changed in a hundred years. In 1898, too, the world could have wrung its hands over a continent where nation-States had been formed in recent years, often cutting across ethnic and linguistic lines, leading to endemic discontent. Democracy had not quite taken root. Development was patchy and its fruits available only to a minority. Conflict was rampant, and fuelled by arms merchants answerable to no one. This was not Africa; it was Europe in the late nineteenth century. But it was never assumed that there lurked in Europe a continental malaise, peculiar to it, for which continental remedies were available. Apart from anything else, international opinion then meant European opinion, and Europe was driven by the ambitions of the great colonial Powers rather than by the problems of the new nations in its midst. This, perhaps, led to the holocausts of the world wars. But Europe has now recovered to levels of prosperity unmatched by any other continent in history, though this took it the better part of a century. It was made possible after 1945 by extremely generous aid, through the Marshall Plan. The World Bank, we sometimes forget, was set up for the reconstruction and development of Europe. Europe's recovery was aided by Europe's control over a system of foreign trade that helped its nations on an export-led path of recovery.

Africa has none of these advantages, but neither are Africa's problems unique. They are not problems because they are African; they are problems which have bedeviled countries in similar situations, in Europe and elsewhere, many times before. The solutions to Africa's problems are the solutions that were found for Europe after 1945: aid, development, trade and cooperation. The Secretary-General has recognized this, since so much of his report

examines the questions of development, which are at the heart of the problems faced by all developing countries, whether they are in Africa or elsewhere. These, however, are not problems which the Security Council can address; they are completely outside its mandate, and we are glad that the Secretary-General's report is also being submitted to the General Assembly and to the other relevant bodies of the United Nations system, including the Bretton Woods institutions. We hope they will look at them carefully.

Africa is not immutably set on a road to conflict and violence. The Secretary-General's report notes that in 1996, 14 of the 53 countries of Africa were in conflict. But this figure came down in 1997 and has continued to fall in 1998. This is surely encouraging. But Africa, like many other developing regions, has been on what Ben Okri called the famished road. The UNICEF study on Africa's recovery in the 1990s noted that while Africa's economies benefited little from the policies followed in the 1960s and 1970s, the adjustment policies forced on Africa in the 1980s did not contribute to the long-term objectives of development adopted by the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in the Lagos Plan of Action of April 1980. Exactly 18 years after that Plan was adopted, we need to ask ourselves why its objectives by and large still remain unfulfilled.

It is virtually impossible now to determine whether the decline or stagnation in parts of Africa were caused by domestic policies, external shocks or the adjustment policies imposed upon them, but there is a fair amount of consensus that responsibility must be equally shared between the three. It is against this background that we should consider whether general prescriptions, however well-meaning, address the real needs of Africa.

Current political orthodoxy recommends a weakening of the State in Africa and elsewhere, through privatization, a reduction of the role of government and greater reliance on market forces. It is not explained how a weak State can be expected simultaneously to tackle the strong interest groups that are believed to have exploited national economies and political systems or, furthermore, how it is to impose the harsh adjustment policies that are still needed to integrate nations into the global economy.

Adjustment and liberalization inevitably impose social tensions, carrying with them the risk that large sections will be pauperized, even if temporarily. This interim period needs to be bridged. Governments going through this period of transformation must have the money to pay for social support, without which adjustment policies will fail. Such failure carries with it the even greater danger that the democratic experiment will also founder, creating precisely those tensions that find release in violence. That countries in transition need massive financial support to pre-empt violence and entrench democracy has been recognized in East Europe. It is a pity that Africa, which has exactly the same problems, as the Secretary-General's analysis makes clear, does not receive anywhere near the same support. As President Vaclav Havel once wrote in a devastating essay on "Evasive Thinking", which the Council could take to heart before it pronounces itself on Africa,

> "Between a detailed prediction of the future and a broad interpretation of the past, there is somehow no room for what is most important of all — a down-to-earth analysis of the present."

This chamber should be haunted by the ghosts of the millions of Africans who would be alive today if they had not been drawn into proxy wars over the last 30 years, and if in Africa in the 1990s the Council had not been held back from action because of the disinterest of the powerful when action could have saved countless lives. Africans themselves, as in Sierra Leone, have tried to take up the burden which the Council was expected to shoulder. If this meeting means that the Council will make a new beginning in Africa, it will have served some purpose.

The Secretary-General has made extremely important suggestions in the section on humanitarian assistance. We have two points to make on this.

First, humanitarian assistance is taking an increasing share of official development assistance, at a time when aid levels are falling just as sharply. Its share of overall aid rose from 1.5 per cent in 1991 to 8.4 per cent in 1994. What this means is that the international community has tried to staunch crises while less and less money is being devoted to addressing the underlying causes, those long-term problems of development that international assistance could best address. In *The State of the World's Refugees 1997*, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees noted that

> "by donating large sums of money to highly publicized relief operations, Governments have to some extent been able to satisfy the demands of public opinion and the international media".

In other words, aid has been channelled to humanitarian assistance to raise the comfort level of donor States, not necessarily to address the real needs of recipients.

Secondly, and even more tellingly, inter-agency consolidated appeals for humanitarian assistance are rarely funded in full for Africa, whereas they are oversubscribed for situations in some other regions.

International interest, therefore, is focused on humanitarian assistance only when a spectacular crisis in Africa, of interest to the world's media, forces international action. The challenge before us is to ensure that there is sustained attention, both in providing humanitarian assistance to those affected and in addressing the long-term causes that create the problems. We note the Secretary-General's intention to take a hard look at the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa; we trust that it will be strengthened, particularly in areas like health, education, technology transfer, trade and investment and food security which would be of immediate and direct benefit to Africans.

Above all, we must not forget or ignore the many remarkable achievements Africa has made when progress has depended on African decisions and actions, and we must remember that failures have quite often been for reasons over which they had no control. The whole world can learn a lesson about political wisdom and magnanimity from South Africa, which has shown us how the challenge of political reconciliation can be addressed, even in apparently impossibly difficult circumstances. Zimbabwe has shown the world how to balance the needs of wildlife and the environment with those of the men and women who make a living from the forests. In the early years of the United Nations Development Programme-sponsored Human Development Report, before political prudence got the better of its authors, Botswana consistently ranked higher in the index than several developed countries. Mauritius surpassed the targets of the Lagos Plan of Action some years ago. These are achievements to be proud of, and to build upon.

And indeed, Africa is doing so. Regional and subregional groupings have emerged in Africa and are stimulating cooperation and economic growth; the international community should help strengthen them. The Secretary General's report on "The World Economy at the Beginning of 1998" forecast that African growth, which had slowed to 3 per cent in 1997, would rebound to 4 per cent this year. This in itself is encouraging, particularly because the Secretary-General's analysis showed that growth had slowed in 1996 only because either drought or floods had affected agriculture. African Governments had continued to follow sound economic policies, according to the Secretary-General. The only exceptions were in six countries affected by political instability or civil strife. In the 38 African countries monitored for the report, the Secretary-General noted that in 1991, only 6 had a gross domestic product growth of 3 per cent or more, and this benefited only 8 per cent of the population. In 1997, the number of such countries had grown to 14, an impressive improvement, and what was most remarkable was that growth in 1997 benefited 33 per cent of the population. In other words, growth in Africa has increasingly become growth with social equity. This is, therefore, not an alarming picture; it is an encouraging one. Certainly, in light of the Secretary-General's analysis, it could not be argued either that Africa was in a systemic crisis, or that the policies of African Governments needed drastic change or improvement.

But when all is said and done, Africa's needs are special and need special attention. The Secretary-General is to be congratulated for the candour with which he has responded to the Council's interest in Africa. As a country with very old historical ties to Africa, cemented after the modern nations of Africa and we both became independent, we have a very keen interest in what happens there. When the Council has responded to conflict situations in Africa by sending peacekeeping operations, India has participated in every one. We share common problems, and we can benefit from each other's experience. We have allocated the bulk of our technical assistance programme to help build up capacities in Africa in areas of African interest. Equally, we believe we have much to learn from Africans as they address challenges which we face in other continents. The Secretary-General's report gives the international community the chance not to preach, but to learn from Africa, to help itself by helping Africa. We hope we will all seize this opportunity.

The President: I thank the representative of India for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of the United Republic of Tanzania. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Mwakawago (United Republic of Tanzania): My delegation wishes to associate itself with the commendations expressed by previous speakers about

your presidency and that of your predecessor, the Ambassador of the Gambia. We also associate ourselves with the statements made by Ambassador Machivenyika Mapuranga of Zimbabwe on behalf of the Organization of African Unity and Ambassador Mahfoudh Ould Deddach of Mauritania on behalf of the African Group for the month of April, as well as that made by Ambassador Khiphusizi Jele of South Africa on behalf of the countries of the Southern African Development Community (SADC). It is a happy coincidence that the Security Council is presided over by Japan, which has been taking important initiatives on African development. We are therefore very optimistic that the results of this debate will be positive.

We would also like to pay tribute to the Security Council for the initiative it took in September 1997 in having a ministerial debate on Africa, the result of which is the report of the Secretary-General, entitled "The causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa". We applaud the Secretary-General for an insightful and constructive report. We welcome the report as a banner headline of the challenges facing Africa and, indeed, the international community as a whole.

A week ago, on 16 April 1998, while introducing the report, the Secretary-General cautioned and underscored a matter we wish to emphasize, if only to highlight a sense of the problem and the magnitude of the challenge we face. He pointed out:

> "Let us never forget that it is the persistence of poverty that is impeding the full promise of peace for all of Africa's peoples. The alleviation of poverty must be the first aim of our efforts. Only then — only when prosperity and opportunity become real — will every citizen, young or old, man or woman, have a genuine and lasting stake in a peaceful future for Africa — politically, economically and socially." [*S/PV.3871, p. 4*]

Indeed, we could add that only then will Africa take its rightful place in the global economy.

Africa is a continent composed of 53 States. Of the 48 least developed countries in the world, 33 or more are in Africa alone. They are also in many ways highly indebted, a factor which further exacerbates poverty in the region. If poverty breeds tension and instability, there could therefore not be a better breeding ground. Not surprisingly, Africa has dominated and continues to dominate the Council's agenda. This is a matter to be regretted. It is also a matter of shame to Africa and to the common humanity we all share. It is a matter calling for urgent reversal. It is equally a matter for which Africa bears primary responsibility. It is nevertheless a matter which, admittedly, Africa alone does not have the answers. Pious hopes or even eloquent rhetoric cannot be a substitute for concrete action. Sadly, Africa, our dear continent, has been the object of many initiatives over the last 10 years, to no avail. Perhaps it is about time to find out why there has been so little progress on the ground.

The Secretary-General's report calls for concerted effort to assist Africa. It also notes the positive changes taking place in the continent in the context of further democratization, governance and economic reforms. These efforts need to be nurtured and promoted. Any concrete contribution that can be made in terms of required resources is an investment in Africa's prosperity, the rewards of which, in the end, will not only be seen in the peace dividends, but also in establishing a firm partnership for truly global cooperation.

The Secretary-General has further made certain recommendations, some of which bear on Africans themselves and some on Africa's cooperating partners, as well as the United Nations. We look forward with anticipation to measures which would transform those recommendations into a workable strategy for real changes in Africa. Perhaps we need to agree how best to proceed from this debate. It is crucially important that there be an appropriate forum where concrete measures and resources will be worked out.

As Africans, we welcome the challenges we have to shoulder. We do, nevertheless, request of our cooperating partners to consider seriously the proposal by the Secretary-General to examine further additional action on the debt facing Africa, particularly that of the least developed countries.

I wish to record our appreciation to the countries that have taken measures to alleviate the debt problem.

Admittedly, the results of well-meant programmes such as the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Debt Initiative of the Bretton Woods institutions have been disappointing. And yet, Africa continues to face crippling debt at a time when even the frailest economies, including that of my country, have just recently been ravaged by the vagaries of the El Niño phenomenon. While Africa does not desire to dishonour its debt

obligations, a cancellation of such a debt burden would release and make available to Africa critical resources it needs to build appropriate infrastructure for its prosperity and peace.

In conclusion, we plead to the Council to follow the positive developments of recent weeks from the continent and come up with a message that will reassure Africans that all hope is not lost. And in that message, it will be reassuring to get an affirmation that the United Nations will work, not only with African countries, but also with the Organization of African Unity, in addressing the twin goals of peace and security on the one hand, and development on the other.

The President: I thank the representative of the United Republic of Tanzania for his kind words addressed to me and to my predecessor.

The next speaker is the representative of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Ibrahim (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (*interpretation from Arabic*): I would like to extend my congratulations to you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Council for this month. I would also like to express our gratitude and appreciation for the skill demonstrated by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Gambia and members of his delegation in their stewardship of the Council last month.

We also thank the Secretary-General for his report on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa. The report contains many subjects and proposals that merit serious examination and deliberate study by bodies of the United Nations.

My delegation will only make preliminary remarks on the report at this stage. Following an in-depth analysis, we will define our position regarding the subjects and the proposals contained therein when the report is discussed by other relevant bodies.

I would like to state at the outset that the Secretary-General indeed put his finger on the root causes of the perennial problems when he identified the results of the policies and strategies of the Congress of Berlin in 1885 as the primary causes which fuel conflict and division afflicting several African societies. The colonial Powers attending the Congress of Berlin partitioned Africa into territorial units. Kingdoms and States in Africa which enjoyed a high civilizational and cultural level were arbitrarily divided and groups and ethnicities were arbitrarily and unjustly fragmented. Likewise, unrelated areas, peoples and tribes were joined together.

The review contained in the report of the Secretary-General reveals that the full spectrum of Africa's problems of political instability in some regions and economic underdevelopment in most if not all countries arose as a result of the practices of those who drew the political boundaries of Africa's countries. Not a single African State demarcated its own political borders with its neighbours. The colonial Powers did that; they divided tribes and communities and sowed the seeds of the violent conflict that we are now witnessing in most parts of the continent. African communities knew neither tyranny nor human rights violations before colonialism. Disputes between tribes, communities or African political entities were resolved peacefully by the wise elders and leaders of Africa.

Despite that, we cannot belittle the political and moral responsibility of all local political actors. It is their responsibility to avoid by all possible means the tragedies and disasters that arose from the fragmentation of their societies and to explore every available means of ensuring harmony and peaceful coexistence among all sectors of those communities. Africa remains in its early stages of development and therefore has every right to choose the political and economic formulas suitable to its particular environment.

In the economic arena, Africa has fared no better than in its social and political spheres. The trade relations laid down by the colonial Powers resulted in long-term distortions, affecting African economies and economic structures. The consequences of this are still being felt today. The conventional patterns of trade that prevailed during the colonial era, which focused on mining, the extraction of raw materials and their transfer outside Africa, have not significantly changed. Moreover, no significant investment was made in the infrastructure, such as in roads, railroads, ports, education or health, among other things.

The trade agreements offered to Africa continue to impose certain conditions that result in inequalities. These conditions include demands of unrestricted foreign investment in all areas and an orientation towards privatization. This has resulted in the African Governments' being forced to sell their economic sectors, including their mining and forestry interests. To whom

were these resources sold? Not, of course, to the private entrepreneurs of Africa, but to the foreign companies and monopolies, whose primary concern is to make enormous profits and satisfy the needs of their shareholders in advanced economic and financial centres.

Is this not an injustice to Africa and an infringement of the sovereignty of its peoples? Those who wish to assist Africa should help to train African nationals and to promote Africa's capacity to exploit the continent's resources and primary commodities. Thus, risks and returns would be shared within a partnership. Africa has as yet no economy and no market and there can therefore be no African partnership in the market economy. There will be no peace without development, growth and economic prosperity. There will be no development and prosperity under the heavy debts burdening Africa. Until the unconscionable terms of assistance imposed by financial institutions, intergovernmental or private, are rescinded; until Africa's debts, in which Powers vying for control of the continent have ensnared African States, are written off; and until fair economic and trade cooperation agreements that take into account the particular circumstances of every African State are reached between Africa and the developed countries, the African Governments will find themselves unable to satisfy the basic needs of their peoples and will remain caught in a vicious circle of conflict over the remaining meagre resources.

It is Africa's full right to demand debt cancellation and it is the duty of creditors seriously to consider that request if they are truly troubled by the deteriorating humanitarian, social and economic conditions in Africa and if they truly see themselves as the future economic and trade partners of Africa and not the new colonialists of the continent. Any relationship, including economic and trade relations, if anchored in equality, would have highly tangible benefits.

However, it is unfair at this point to require the African States to engage in competition, to their detriment, with those who have progressed at Africa's expense and have had a head start of centuries. It is, indeed, unreasonable that Africa should be left to languish in the grip of intra- and inter-State conflicts and backwardness. It is illogical that the international community should stand idly by, throwing crumbs of charity to Africa and giving lip-service that solves no problems, satisfies no hunger and offers no genuine hope of salvation.

If the developed countries do have the good faith and political will to assist in the development of Africa, they should at least desist from taking any measure that would hinder the development efforts of the African countries. One such measure is the imposition of arbitrary economic sanctions, such as those imposed by the United States of America on Libya, the Sudan and Nigeria — freezing their assets, severing political and economic relations, and denying them access to technology needed for growth and progress. As if all this were not enough, the United States has enacted legislation to block cooperation between those States and other countries.

The responsibility for everything that occurred in Africa in the past and that is now taking place should be borne by those who originally caused it. The time has come for the Powers that colonized Africa, exploited its wealth and resources and enslaved its peoples to offer solemn apologies and pay full reparations for all the damage wrought by colonialism. As Mr. Robert Mugabe, President of the Republic of Zimbabwe and Chairman of the Organization of African Unity, stated before the General Assembly and the Security Council, Africa seeks no charity from anyone; rather, it claims a restoration of its rights. A refusal to pay compensation and to offer an apology can be understood only as a perpetuation of a racist attitude that looks down upon the peoples of Africa.

These were general remarks on the causes and sources of conflict in the African continent. My delegation would now like to make some specific remarks on the content, or lack thereof, of the report.

First, my delegation is extremely surprised that the report does not make any reference whatsoever to a conflict that has a negative impact on peace and security on the African continent as well as on the development efforts there. I am referring to the existing dispute over the Lockerbie issue between the United States of America and the United Kingdom on one hand, and the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya on the other. It is even more surprising because the dispute has been, since its inception, at the centre of interest of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) at the highest level. The OAU has over the years made continuous efforts to reach an expeditious, peaceful and fair solution that would uncover the truth and end the unjust suffering of the Arab people of Libya, who have been the victims of unjustified sanctions whose illegality has been proven.

This interest in the dispute on the part of the OAU was expressed by His Excellency President Mugabe of the Republic of Zimbabwe, current Chairman of the

OAU, during his statement before the Security Council on 25 September 1997:

> "I would be remiss were I not to raise another matter of concern to the African continent that requires the attention of the Council and that was debated at the last summit meeting of the Organization of African Unity, namely, the need to find a solution to the dispute between Libya, the United States of America and the United Kingdom over the Lockerbie tragedy. In addition to the families of those who lost their lives, many other innocent third persons continue to suffer as a result of the sanctions imposed on Libya. Now that Libya has agreed that the two accused Libyans can be tried under Scottish law, by Scottish judges but in a third country or at the International Court of Justice, we feel that this offer should receive your serious consideration so that matters can move forward. The Organization of African Unity stands ready to assist in trying to break the present impasse." [*S/PV.3819, p. 4*]

The Secretary-General of the OAU and the ministers who spoke at that Council meeting agreed with this statement.

If the Security Council does indeed wish to help resolve African problems, it only has to act today in accordance with the wishes expressed in no uncertain terms by the African nations and the international community as a whole before the Security Council on 20 March 1998. Thus it would lift the sanctions imposed on the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya and adopt one of the options to resolve the dispute proposed by the OAU and the League of Arab States and endorsed by the Organization of the Islamic Conference, the Non-Aligned Movement and the majority of the members of the Security Council, or await the ruling of the International Court of Justice, which stressed that it has jurisdiction to consider the dispute and the purely legal nature of that dispute. Therefore, there remains no moral/political or legal justification for the maintenance of sanctions.

Secondly, my delegation strongly supports the right of all States to acquire the means of self-defence and believes that it is their exclusive, inherent right in view of the potential of foreign threats. It is inadmissible that only African States should have their expenditures for the acquisition of armament restricted to a certain percentage without regard to the particular circumstances of each State. In this context, the proposal of the Secretary-General, whether regarding the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms or the volume of military spending, should be reviewed. In this regard, we must recall that a number of African countries are threatened today by a non-African country that has an enormous arsenal of weapons of mass destruction and refuses to subject those weapons to any international supervision, while being supported by a permanent member of this Council. My country would also cite the military arrangements that are being made outside Africa in order to prepare for possible interference in certain African countries.

Thirdly, my country, whose people have suffered for over six years as a result of the harmful impact of the illegal collective sanctions which this Council was pressured to adopt, would warn against the slippery slope of hasty adoption of such sanctions irrespective of pressures or temptations. This stems from my country's belief in the futility of such sanctions in the first place, and its recognition of their devastating effects on the living conditions of entire peoples. We also believe that resort to peaceful channels and means for the resolution of conflicts is the only way to secure lasting peace and security.

Fourthly, my country welcomes the consolidation of cooperation between the United Nations and the OAU in the area of the peaceful settlement of disputes. We see this as a natural matter which lies within the provisions of Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter that afford regional arrangements an important role in the maintenance of international peace and security. As my country looks forward to the promotion of this cooperation, we call upon the United Nations, the primary custodian of international peace and security, to enhance the capacity of the OAU to prevent, manage and settle disputes and promote peacekeeping efforts. This should be done through supporting the Mechanism established in 1993 by the OAU for this purpose. My country would like to underscore the need for the United Nations to increase its support of the capacity of the OAU and subregional groups to carry out conflict prevention, management and resolution. We also strongly oppose any policies aimed at creating any military or security arrangements under any pretext coming from outside the continent or without the consent of the OAU. Africa, in the final analysis, has no ally except itself. Experience has taught us that African skill and wisdom, when not impeded by foreign Powers, can indeed find peaceful and practical solutions to African conflicts and disputes.

Finally, my delegation fervently hopes that today's meeting will not prove to be an isolated event or a single

occasion. In this regard, we agree with the Secretary-General's proposal that the Security Council should convene at the ministerial level once every two years and at the summit level once every five years. We also hope that concern for African issues, especially those relating to peace and development, will not be addressed by one intergovernmental body only, but will be dealt with at the highest levels across the board in all organs of the United Nations system.

The President: I thank the representative of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya for the kind words he addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Colombia. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Forero (Colombia) (*interpretation from Spanish*): I wish to begin by congratulating you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month.

Let me join other delegations in thanking the Secretary-General for submitting his report on the causes of conflict in Africa, a most important contribution to the quest for an explanation of the violence and instability which have been experienced by the African continent throughout its entire recent history and which have perceptibly increased in recent years.

I must note at the outset that, as a developing country, we are linked by powerful ties of solidarity and kinship to that continent, all of whose countries are members of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries. We therefore welcome the fact that, even though it has been late in coming — all too late if we consider the millions of lives lost while the international community stood by indifferent — there is now an investigation into the underlying causes of this great suffering and desolation, something which the Non-Aligned Movement has urged for many years now.

The report of the Secretary-General is first and foremost a document whose scope demands careful study by the General Assembly. In view of the importance of this matter, all Members of the United Nations, and especially African countries, must contribute their views. This will give us additional perspectives on the report, which will make possible a discussion aimed at defining a common United Nations position on this matter. This examination must not become just another endless debate; what is needed is conclusions that will enable us to adopt specific, urgent measures. But this will be impossible, and its implementation will be ineffective, without consensus among the international community, and especially among the African countries.

The report's analysis and recommendations do not themselves constitute a definitive navigational chart for the international community, for African States or for developing countries in general. The report is a serious and intelligent effort by a son of Africa with great experience in United Nations peace efforts in that continent. But the unfair fate of Africa, resulting from prejudice and from prescriptions imposed by an international community that has repeatedly failed to understand the complex realities of Africa, is lesson enough that this time we must act cautiously and, most important, respectfully when considering the action that should follow general agreement on the international system's policies towards Africa.

As the Secretary-General notes in his report, development is a human right — my delegation would say a fundamental human right — and is the long-term goal of all the nations of Africa. Unfortunately, the seriousness of Africa's problems, on so many fronts, means that the need for greatly accelerated economic development will not allow development to be relegated to a less important position vis-à-vis other equally pressing factors in the sphere of peace.

Developing countries hold the view that, when it is a matter of achieving development, political efforts should not have priority over economic efforts. We are therefore concerned that some might see the opposite position in this report or detect a focus that promotes the idea that the fulfilment of certain political or institutional standards is a sine qua non if Africa is to rid itself of underdevelopment. We believe that we must make an effort to avoid dogmatic stances that would favour one position and reject another when considering whether solutions should first tackle the problems of peace or the problems of development.

We want to stress the report's view that African countries should understand that the ability to achieve peace lies first and foremost in their own hands, and that the effectiveness of international support hinges on the cooperation and political will of the recipient State. We agree that any analysis of Africa must be based on something other than the image of a dependent continent anchored in the traumas of its colonial post, and that the

ability of Africans to determine their own future must be recognized.

But we must take care not to assign to African countries a responsibility beyond their capacities, thus absolving the international community of nearly all its responsibilities while leaving it with the power to monitor compliance with a whole set of political, social and institutional obligations and requirements. In our view, the notion of Africa's principal responsibility with respect to its own problems implies that both the cooperation and the explicit consent of the State in question are essential for the success of international efforts to promote peace, and are moreover a basic principle of international law.

My delegation will now speak briefly about several specific elements of the report. We fully agree with the Secretary-General's initiative by which the Security Council would urgently take up the question of publicly identifying international arms traffickers and their activities. There may be no more harmful international influence on Africa and on developing countries in general than the illegal introduction of weapons to their territories. Hence, the international community's neglect of this issue has unacceptable moral implications. The response of the Security Council must be commensurate with the scope of the problem; it should set up a multilateral machinery that would begin by compiling and publishing information on those who engage in the illegal traffic in arms.

We view as interesting the Secretary-General's analysis of humanitarian issues. His statement that human security is the cardinal mission of the United Nations is the most original utterance on this subject. But this is a poorly defined concept that is not set out in the Charter, and it must be discussed very carefully, as must the concepts that derive from it, such as the use of force by the Security Council to defend members of a peacekeeping operation, humanitarian workers in a hostile environment, or refugees or displaced persons subjected to massive violence. Perhaps the initial answer to questions to which these matters give rise can be found in the Secretary-General's reference to the fact that the operations in Bosnia and in Somalia illustrate the magnitude of the challenges and dangers posed for peacekeepers and humanitarian workers operating in a hostile environment without the consent or support of all of the parties.

In the opinion of my delegation, United Nations efforts to find an effective machinery to defend the recipients of humanitarian assistance, as well as those who distribute it, must be reconciled with the need to respect the intergovernmental nature of the Organization and therefore the sovereignty of Member States. The most notable aspect of the report is its attempt to understand the new realities that define the causes of recent conflicts in the light of lessons learned over recent years. But, just as the failure in Somalia should not discourage the international community about its ability to take action for peace in Africa, that and other exceptional cases should not be used as models for building a theory that would disregard the sovereignty and have no faith in the intentions and the legitimacy of African States.

Another noteworthy aspect of the report is its search for approaches ensuring that the efforts of the international community do not end with the signing of peace accords, but that they seek to foster development and stability from all possible angles. This necessarily implies the establishment of boundaries between efforts for the maintenance of international peace and security, which are mainly within the competence of the Security Council, and activities for the reconstruction and strengthening of institutions, which by their very nature fall under the purview of the General Assembly. It is not a good idea to erase the dividing line between responsibilities carried out by force and those designed to assist the social and institutional efforts of States, which must be transparent and consensual.

The report of the Secretary-General offers the international community a framework and instruments that constitute a challenge as well as an opportunity to try to recuperate from all the years of oblivion and discrimination to which the African continent has been subjected. It is clear that respect and cooperation are the only way.

The President: I thank the representative of Colombia for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Lebanon. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Moubarak (Lebanon) (*interpretation from French*): Allow me first of all to sincerely congratulate you, Mr. President, on the manner in which you are guiding the debates of the Council this month. Allow me also to thank your predecessor, the Permanent Representative of the Gambia, for the manner in which he conducted the Council's debates last month.

We welcome the fact that the Council is getting down to the job of developing concerted international action to promote peace and security in Africa. Indeed, the situation in the great African continent remains a subject of deep concern requiring a global response.

We welcome the Secretary-General's report on the causes of conflicts and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa. The report has the merit of grappling with all aspects of the problem by analysing the sources of conflict both in terms of their historical context and in terms of internal and external factors. It also has the merit of getting down to an overall plan of action in order to act on potential conflict situations by establishing conditions of good governance through respect for human rights and the rule of law, as well as through responsibility in public administration through harmonized economic growth and the rigorous establishment of democracy.

It is high time Africa was given the means to which it aspires in order to allow it to ensure for its peoples a harmonious sustainable development, both structurally and in crisis situations. It is high time Africa was able to free itself from its debt burden in order to give special priority to social development, in particular through the restructuring of international assistance and the opening up of international markets. It is high time regional cooperation and integration was supported by harmonizing the international and bilateral initiatives now under way. It is high time the bloody conflicts in Africa were put to an end, in particular by limiting the proliferation of weapons. It is equally urgent to seriously address ways and means of preventing new conflicts by laying the foundations of sustained economic growth.

The ills of the African continent are numerous and interdependent. The Security Council, as well as the General Assembly and the other United Nations organs whose responsibilities include Africa, will have to stress more than ever their interaction if we wish Africa to overcome the conflicts and underdevelopment that continue to hinder its development and growth. It is clear that the Bretton Woods institutions will have to be closely linked to this great challenge of the beginning of the third millennium.

Since 1970, more than 30 wars have ravaged Africa, especially internal conflicts, causing more than 8 million refugees and displaced persons. The causes have been diverse and now have given rise to critical self-examination at the global level. This is the beginning of wisdom. Colonialism has left a legacy of deep structural and humanitarian problems that have hindered the building of States and nations. Africa continues to feel those effects. The effects are still being felt in terms of economy, social rights and inter-African trade.

Today it is recognized that it is essential to take swift, concrete measures at the first signs of crisis. There are indeed various means available, but we often lack the common will to contain a brewing crisis. Swift action is essential, and this applies also to humanitarian assistance, the corollary of conflicts.

But over and above the concrete urgent measures that must be taken to prevent new conflicts, it is necessary to emphasize that a return to normality can occur only through rebuilding and development at the State, economic and human levels. The process must be continuous, and it is useless to resort to short-term or limited operations if they are not sustained through responsible assistance by the international community through all its various organs, in particular through massive financing and coordinated international action.

In order to compensate for low savings it is essential to encourage investments, in particular through the Bretton Woods institutions. Let us not delude ourselves: economic recovery in Africa can take place only through the generous and courageous action of the international community. It is Africa's legitimate right and the duty of the entire international community. The competitive global trade environment must be adjusted if international cooperation is to be really meaningful.

These conclusions have indeed already been reached and reiterated at numerous international conferences at the regional level, in the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, in the Group of 77, in the Economic and Social Council and in the General Assembly. This fundamental debate today in the Security Council on the resurgence of Africa should not be a dead letter. Let us ensure that the dream becomes reality. It is no longer possible to avoid our obligations to Africa. Several decades have been lost through endless talk, when we know what the remedies are to solve the diverse problems facing Africa. The time is past when, as the Secretary-General says in paragraph 107 of his report,

> "the responsibility for producing change could be shifted on to other shoulders".

In an interdependent world it makes no sense to hope for independent development in any region of the globe unless there is harmonious development on the great African continent. For our part, we vigorously support the historic priority to be accorded to Africa in order to allow it to achieve a future for its peoples that is commensurate with its rights, its ambitions, its responsibilities and its wisdom.

The President: I thank the representative of Lebanon for his kind words addressed to me and to my predecessor.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the Most Reverend Secretary for Relations with States of the Holy See, Archbishop Jean-Louis Tauran. In accordance with the decision taken earlier in the meeting, I welcome the Most Reverend Secretary for Relations with States of the Holy See and invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Archbishop Tauran (*interpretation from French*): It is a great honour for me to take the floor in this Chamber on behalf of Pope John Paul II, who has instructed me to convey his cordial greetings and to tell the Council how much he shares its concerns and its desire to support the peoples of the African continent. Just one month ago, during his pastoral visit to Nigeria, he did not hesitate to introduce himself as "a friend of Africa".

The Holy See is particularly grateful to the Secretary-General for the report that he has prepared for the international community, drawing to our attention his vision of today's Africa. The Holy See shares his analyses, which are marked by realism and solidarity.

As Mr. Kofi Annan notes, Africa is not lacking in either material or human resources. The sense of family, respect for elders and hospitality to refugees are manifestations of the love for life and the fraternal spirit that are so dear to Africans.

But who among us would disagree with other elements that the report highlights? The ongoing degradation of natural resources, the vast tracts of unproductive land, widespread malnutrition, inadequate health-care policies, cruel ethnic conflicts, a fragile spirit of democracy, systematic corruption and the weight of external debt are so many wounds to the spirit of kinship and harmony. In fact, all these problems are linked. Injustices foster wars, conflicts lead to poverty, extreme poverty results in the displacement of individuals, and the impoverishment of whole societies brings about despair and passivity.

All of these aspects of the African situation are formidable challenges that the international community must take up. Allow me to assure the Council that, in its efforts to do this, it will always find at its side the Catholic Church, whose solicitous concern for Africa has a long history. Formerly, it was the generosity of missionaries; today it is priests, nuns and indigenous laypersons who have lent their voices to those who have none and who have cared for, educated and shared the difficult and laborious daily life of millions of Africans. That is why, inspired by this solidarity with past and present Africans, I would like to share with the Council the Holy See's priorities with regard to Africa.

The lack of respect for the human person, which has characterized the life of Africans, sows hatred and continues to foster countless conflicts. This very morning — despite many appeals for clemency, including from Pope John Paul II — public executions took place in several Rwandan locations, plunging Africans and their friends into despair. Everyone knows that this is not the way to foster the national reconciliation so needed in Rwanda.

It is therefore necessary to create a new awareness that respects life, ethnic diversity and the abilities of each individual. The violation of the rights of the human person, of which inter-ethnic massacres are the most tragic manifestation, call for immediate and clear human rights education to put an end to situations where might makes right.

Persistent poverty has led to passivity and despair. We must restore courage and optimism to those peoples whose lands, as the Secretary-General states in paragraph 104 of his report,

> "are rich and fertile enough to provide a solid foundation for prosperity".

The international community must permit Africa to ensure its own economic development. This would require an immediate search for measures capable of leading to the cancellation of foreign debt, as well as the opening of markets without insisting upon burdensome conditions — by providing, for example, preferential economic assistance and appropriate transfers of technology. All of this, of course, would have to be carried out in a manner that takes into account the proper pace for African development.

Armed conflicts are most often born of the thirst for power. Only education that promotes democracy respectful of local traditions, along with political dialogue, will be able to bring about justice and peace. Pope John Paul II, addressing the diplomatic corps accredited to the Holy See last January stated,

> "If violent attainment of power becomes the norm, if insistence on ethnic considerations continues to override all other concerns, if democratic representation is systematically put aside, if corruption and the arms trade continue to rage, then Africa will never experience peace or development, and future generations will mercilessly judge these pages of African history."

The wisdom of leaders, enlightened by the progress in political and administrative science, should help them understand better that political activity is, first and foremost, service to others.

The constant flow of arms of all kinds from one country to another not only increases violence, it also leads Governments to go further into debt, thus seriously delaying economic and social development. The international community is, fortunately, increasingly aware that this cannot be justified and that exporting arms becomes, in fact, a means of collaborating in conflicts and genocides. No one can remain unmoved by such a situation, nor can it be forgotten that it is armed violence, along with extreme poverty, that was the source of the tragic fate of the 8 million refugees mentioned in the report.

Of course, the problems of Africa must be resolved by the Africans themselves. But we must admit that they cannot succeed if they are abandoned and left to themselves, and even less if they become pawns of hegemonies and foreign interference from near or far. Africa needs disinterested friends who are inspired by a political will to help the vital forces in their societies take the path towards respectful political dialogue, equitable public administration and fraternal solidarity. The economic progress and social development that certain African countries have already experienced, thanks in part to effective regional cooperation, demonstrates that there is hope. The efforts of all must be united in order to make progress in this direction.

In conclusion, allow me to cite once more Pope John Paul II:

> "Africa bears the scars of its long history of humiliations. This continent has too frequently been considered only for selfish interests. Today Africa is asking to be loved and respected for what it is. It does not ask for compassion, it asks for solidarity." [*Angelus of 24 September 1995*]

The President: The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Italy. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Terzi di Sant'Agata (Italy): First of all, I wish to associate myself with the statement made by the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom on behalf of the European Union.

My authorities have carefully assessed the Secretary-General's report. Italy fully shares and supports the Secretary-General's recommendations and conclusions. The report goes beyond easy rhetoric to realistically address the inextricably related problems of peace and development. The Secretary-General's recommendations and suggestions should be translated into concrete actions to foster full collaboration with African countries. In addition to the Security Council, other United Nations bodies, in particular the Economic and Social Council, should ensure that there is appropriate follow-up and that the significant economic implications that this report contains are implemented.

Africa has experienced tragedies and conflicts, but the picture is changing, however slowly, and prospects look brighter today than in the past. The holding of free elections, the consolidation of democratic Governments and the increase in the growth rate contain the seeds of hope. Africa is once again at the centre of the international community's attention, as is proved by the initiatives of the United Nations, the Bretton Woods institutions and the G-8. We hope that this renewed attention leads to a greater awareness of the potentially harmful effects of what would be an unacceptable marginalization of the continent in the global economic environment.

The social and human costs of poverty — the primary cause of conflicts — are high. The recent meeting in New York between the United Nations and the international financial institutions in the framework of the Economic and Social Council emphasized the idea that we must continue to join forces to eradicate poverty and open the road to future sustainable development. This is particularly true for the African continent.

The international community, as the Secretary-General has underlined, should aim to help African Governments create an environment favourable to investment flows and alleviating the burden of debt. Development cooperation must aim more and more to create economic partnerships rather than economic dependency.

In particular, we need to promote the integration of African countries into the flow of international trade and investments at a time when there is a drive towards the liberalization of exchanges and when Africa is experiencing a decline in its export rates and in the flow of direct investments.

On the basis of this premise, Italy's policy, outlined in September 1996 by our Minister for Foreign Affairs, Lamberto Dini, aims to increase collaboration with African countries at every level in the prevention and peaceful settlement of conflicts and the promotion and affirmation of democratic processes and development. Pacification, economic development, the safeguarding of human rights, respect for minorities, inter-ethnic coexistence and the acceptance of religious and cultural diversity are primary aspects of this programme. Our location in the Mediterranean leads us to see the African continent as a priority area for political and economic commitment.

In this framework, development cooperation represents an essential instrument. Africa receives a prominent share of Italian aid, which is contributed both bilaterally and through the international organizations and also in the form of emergency relief for refugees. In its latest budget, my Government included a provision for the conversion of debt in developing countries into investments.

We support the Secretary-General's appeal to reflect on the best response to African conflict situations. The United Nations can also help lower tensions through increased recourse to mediation and by facilitating negotiation and dialogue, as provided for under Chapter VI of the Charter, in close collaboration with the interested regional and subregional organizations.

The Somalia and Rwanda experiences have demonstrated the need to place the accent on prevention; we share the Secretary-General's views on this point.

In the Horn of Africa Italy is collaborating with countries that belong to the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD): Djibouti, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya, Somalia, the Sudan and Uganda. Since November 1996, Italy has chaired the IGAD Forum, aimed at bringing together the organization's member countries and Western donor countries. On 19 and 20 January this year the first ministerial meeting took place in Rome to give new impetus to negotiations on the resolution of conflicts in the region and to the process of regional economic growth. In this area, the most acute crisis is still Somalia. Our efforts are aimed at contributing to the Organization of African Unity, IGAD and all other initiatives to re-establish in Somalia the conditions for civil coexistence and to give a State back to the Somali people. To this end, on 4 May in Rome the first meeting of the Committee for Somalia will be held, established in the framework of the IGAD Partners' Forum.

Hundreds of Italian nationals were present and active as volunteers in the Great Lakes region, even at the most dramatic moments. Italy also supports parallel forms of preventive diplomacy, such as the initiative of the Community of Sant'Egidio to bring together the parties in Burundi, following its successful experience in Mozambique.

We must not forget that in Africa some peacekeeping operations have been crowned with success, such as that in Mozambique, or are showing signs of being on the road to success, such as that in Angola. These experiences prove that when the right basic conditions are in place, the deployment of a United Nations peacekeeping operation can be a most effective instrument.

In this respect, we also share the Secretary-General's analysis of the usefulness of preventive peacekeeping missions and of co-deployments of multinational and United Nations forces, as was the case in Liberia.

Italy believes that the excessive accumulation of conventional arms can destabilize regions in Africa or aggravate conflicts. In other continents, the agreements on force limitation and arms control have been a reality for some time now. After prohibiting the manufacture of anti-personnel landmines, Italy signed the Ottawa Convention. Because of the serious effects of such weapons on populations, the United Nations demining assistance programmes must be fully supported. We support Mali's initiative for a moratorium on the import, export and manufacture of small arms in the Sahara-Sahel region. Together with other countries, we are participating in the initiative that the newly created Department for Disarmament Affairs is coordinating in

the framework of resolution 52/38 G, and we will contribute to a seminar on this subject in Libreville.

Finally, I wish to draw special attention to the part of the Secretary-General's report regarding humanitarian assistance, in particular the protection of civilians in conflict situations and the impact of conflicts on human rights and on children's rights. These aspects require a strong commitment by the international community as a whole to launch broad-based initiatives in defence of the sectors of the population that are weakest and most vulnerable to war-related violence.

The President: The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Cuba. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Rodríguez Parilla (Cuba) (*interpretation from Spanish*): I should like to thank the Gambia for its important contribution during its presidency of the Security Council, and I should like to wish you, Mr. President, success during your leadership of this important body.

Today the Security Council is formally considering, through a public debate, the progress and problems of Africa, matters which, because of their importance and nature, must also be taken up by the General Assembly and other bodies within the system, which should fully exercise their authority and fulfil their responsibilities so as to help the region.

Cuba welcomes the report of the Secretary-General being considered at this meeting, and we acknowledge its indubitable merits. We are particularly pleased that it includes reference to certain elements pertaining to the origins of conflict on the African continent and the consequences of colonialism for African nations.

We attach the utmost importance to the international community's reflections on the problems of the African continent. In particular, we consider it of vital importance that urgent measures be adopted throughout the United Nations system in order to support the successes and progress that Africa is achieving at the cost of terrible hardship, as well as to contribute to the bold efforts African countries are making for development, to remove the serious external obstacles in their way, to put an end to the grave consequences and imbalances brought about by colonial and neo-colonial pillaging, to confront the poverty in which millions of our African brothers live and to resolve the overwhelming problems of the present and the threats of future marginalization.

Of the regions that make up the so-called third world, or the developing world, as we are sometimes euphemistically called, the African continent is undoubtedly the one that has suffered most. The massive colonization of that continent and the centuries of colonial plunder have led to an almost unparalleled accumulation of serious economic and social problems.

While the practice of slavery existed in other regions of the third world, Africa was the continent where slavery was reborn in modern times and millions of Africans were abducted, where the genocide of the conquest occurred and where enormous wealth was extracted to feed the prosperity of a few countries and make possible the development they enjoy today.

Africa has been more plundered than any other region. The worst of it is that today, like all the developing world, it continues to suffer from the philosophy of plunder, which cannot be spoken of in the past tense because it is a fully contemporary phenomenon, one we will undoubtedly continue to have to speak of in the coming millennium if the growing marginalization is not reversed and if so-called globalization does not include real opportunities to do something other than increase the opulence of the few and the poverty of most of the planet's inhabitants.

The debt to the African continent has not yet been settled. While it is up to the international community as a whole to contribute to the search for ways to bring about its recovery and development, the greatest historical responsibility falls on those countries that for years benefited from Africa, from its resources and from the labour of its men and women.

Historical apologies are not enough. Nor is the solution to Africa's problems to be found in the marketplace or to be considered a business matter; cooperation and solidarity are required.

Despite the initiatives of financial institutions and the United Nations system, as well as the occasional contributions made by some countries, the African countries continue to be burdened by the unbearable weight of external debt, adjustment measures, the unfair and unstable international monetary system, trade imbalance and protectionist and discriminatory measures, all of which widen the gap that separates them from the countries of the first world.

What we, the developing countries, seek in our relations with developed countries is not charity, but equal and non-discriminatory treatment, fair prices for products, fair access to international markets and, finally, a cessation of the continuous pillage to which our peoples, including the African peoples, are subjected.

Cuba is proud of the enormous contribution it has received from hundreds of thousands of Africans, and of its own origins, which have deep African roots. We Cubans are deeply proud of the African blood that flows in our veins and of the fact that the presence and assistance of Africa contributed decisively and indelibly to forging the Cuban nation.

It has been our fundamental duty to offer, with the fullest respect, absolute unselfishness and deep humility, our cooperation to Africa, and Cuban blood has been shed in struggles for the independence of its peoples. We have also tried, and despite our economic difficulties we continue to try, day by day, our cooperation, primarily by sending doctors and teachers to Africa and by training professionals and technicians in our country.

Cuba confirms its will and its commitment to continue to cooperate, within its limited resources, with other third world countries and with the cause of Africa. Cuba hopes that the entire international community will join in these efforts for Africa, and we expect this in particular from those who have the sufficient and necessary means to do so. This would be a minimal act of justice and reciprocity, and, to view it from an objectionable and selfish viewpoint of national interest, it would even be an indispensable investment for the future and to ensure the stability of the world.

Peace cannot be exported or imposed, it is true, and much less can it be imposed by force of arms. Lasting solutions cannot emerge from the barrels of guns. It is not by imposing allegedly democratic models, by weakening the sovereignty of States or by requiring the use of neoliberal recipes for adjustment that we will advance towards peace.

As long as tens of millions of Africans live in hunger, disease, ignorance and injustice, there will be no peace in Africa. As long as the profound structural causes of conflicts are not eliminated, there will be no peace in Africa. As long as there is no social peace, there will be no peace.

Africa has extraordinary potential and needs only the opportunity that all developed countries had in their beginnings to demonstrate the strength and qualities of its people, the depth and wealth of its culture, the talent and unselfishness of its children. This is further supported by the enormous economic resources that are at its disposal.

Africa must be treated as an equal partner and as the extremely weighty factor in the balance of the world that it is. The world must, of necessity, change if it wishes to survive, and in that new, lasting world that we are still far from discovering or constructing, Africa will be essential and will occupy its rightful place.

The President: I thank the representative of Cuba for his statement and for his kind words addressed to my predecessor and me.

The next speaker is the representative of the Philippines. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Mabilangan (Philippines): The Philippines joins previous speakers, particularly those from our brotherly African delegations, in commending you, Mr. President, and the Security Council for the convening of this highly important meeting and in welcoming the comprehensive report on peace and development in Africa issued by the Secretary-General. I am particularly delighted to see you, Sir, presiding over this meeting, knowing your deep personal interest in African development and progress. It is indeed timely that the Secretary-General and the Security Council have devoted this occasion to a serious evaluation of the current political, humanitarian and socio-economic conditions faced by the continent. This is complementary to the work of the other organs and groups within the United Nations system, particularly the General Assembly.

My delegation shares the concerns raised by the Secretary-General in his report and amplified by the statements of our African colleagues. We reaffirm that, ultimately, the key to the resolution of conflicts in Africa and in all regions is to address in a meaningful way the problems of development in its social, economic, cultural and humanitarian aspects. Prevention, in the comprehensive sense, is far superior to cure.

The socio-economic situation in Africa is of priority concern. International solidarity is fundamental to Africa's development, and international cooperation and

support must necessarily complement the national resources mobilized by the African countries themselves. It is troubling, however, that as is noted in the United Nations Agenda for Development, tackling the problems and paving the way to accelerated and self-sustaining growth and sustainable development through decisive implementation of commitments and actions have been lacking. Official development assistance to the continent has consistently declined over the past five years, and the debt problems of many African countries have yet to see a comprehensive and durable solution. The international community must undertake purposeful efforts to carry out fully and speedily the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s, as well as the recommendation of the mid-term review of its implementation.

We are greatly encouraged by certain developments in the continent, particularly the increasingly active role of African regional and subregional organizations in mediation and crisis management, as well as in economic cooperation. As in the recent case of Liberia, the Organization of African Unity and the Economic Community of West African States have played a major and indispensable role. The Southern African Development Community, with the new democratic Republic of South Africa, is emerging as a key actor in African affairs. These developments parallel the situation in my region, South-East Asia, where the Association of South-East Asian Nations has steadily evolved to become a regional coordinating mechanism. In the realization of further South-South cooperation, the importance of which was clearly underscored by Mr. Annan's report, African regional organizations may wish to seek to expand cooperation with other regional economic groupings.

As for the various political/security dimensions discussed by the report, I would like to bring into our deliberations today the thinking which has emerged so far from the various working groups of the General Assembly on an Agenda for Peace. The results of the two concluded subgroups, those on coordination and sanctions, are of the same mind as the Secretary-General's report. Closer coordination is called for between the United Nations system and African regional organizations, a point also underscored by the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations. At the same time, Security Council sanctions should be more discerning in that their effects on the populace at large of the target country and on third States should be taken into account to a greater degree.

Post-conflict peace-building is a reconstructive process which has political, economic, humanitarian and social dimensions. By definition, it is launched after a conflict. Hence, it is important that post-conflict peace-building activities be undertaken in an integrated and coordinated manner aimed at addressing the various factors that caused or threaten to rekindle the conflict. The Security Council has an important role to play in this endeavour. However, the participation of United Nations and other international bodies would be equally essential, if not more crucial in many cases, given the multidimensional and development-oriented aspect of post-conflict peace-building.

The proliferation of arms, particularly small arms, and of mines, should be curtailed. My country has supported the Council's various sanctions on the flow of arms into the crisis areas of the continent and calls on all Member States to do their part in restricting such activity.

Democracy, as the guiding principle of the international community's efforts in the political sphere, should be underlined. The Secretary-General's report echoes the thinking of the International Conference on New or Restored Democracies, particularly on the need to realize good and strengthened democratic governance, to promote transparency and accountability and to enhance administrative capacity in individual States. The International Conference on New or Restored Democracies also believes that the strong participation of civil society plays an indispensable role in assuring the realization of truly democratic governance.

The international community's renewed commitment to Africa — which is indeed a timely and necessary endeavour — should ultimately take into account the work already being done by the various organs, bodies and groups of the United Nations system, and that such work can proceed most efficiently if a division of labour is maintained.

The President: I thank the representative of the Philippines for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Cyprus. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Zackheos (Cyprus): Allow me to extend to you, Sir, my congratulations and to express my confidence that, under your widely acknowledged wisdom and leadership, our deliberations will be successful.

My delegation has aligned itself with the statement made on behalf of the European Union, but in view of the special significance of the item under discussion, I would like to make a few additional remarks.

At the outset, I would like to pay tribute to the Secretary-General and extend our appreciation for his excellent, thorough report and to commend him for the special importance the Secretariat and he personally attach to the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa. His recommendations merit the most serious consideration and support of the international community.

Cyprus considers this discussion in the Security Council as a good opportunity for refocusing the attention of the international community and its commitment to strengthen peace and security and to support Africa's endeavours for economic and social development. We believe that Africa, with its talented people and vast fertile lands, has the capability to face the challenge and emerge as a significant factor in world politics in the next century.

Cyprus welcomes the positive developments taking place across Africa in the political field. We have been encouraged by the democratization process and the efforts of African countries in the field of protection of human rights. We have also rejoiced at the termination of the abhorrent policy of apartheid, which constituted an affront to human civilization. We note in this respect the contribution of Nelson Mandela, one of the greatest figures of the twentieth century.

A major concern of the international community, however, is the alarming number of mostly internal armed conflicts in the continent, which, in addition to endangering peace and stability, cause extreme suffering, especially to women and children. In this respect, we welcome the realistic recommendations of the Secretary-General. In general, we support the close coordination for early action and prevention between the United Nations, the European Union and subregional groups. Our special preoccupation, in view of similar bitter experiences since 1974, is the plight of more than 8 million refugees and displaced persons. This problem needs to be addressed urgently on the basis of human rights norms.

While we note the progress made in some African countries, we observe that serious economic problems still persist. Noting the courage and burden of African countries in pursuit of economic reform, we believe that the international community should redouble its efforts to alleviate the suffering of millions of people. Special attention should be given to debt relief and to the needs of the least developed countries in Africa.

Economic development and social justice need to be addressed as matters of high priority in order to enable Africa to meet challenges and take advantage of opportunities which have emerged internationally in recent years.

My country, located at the crossroads of three continents, has long been a bridge of cooperation in the region. Being so close to Africa, we have always had strong ties with the African peoples, especially in our common goal to implement the provisions of the United Nations Charter, which has always been a major factor of our foreign policy.

Cyprus, within its potential, has consistently offered assistance to African countries. In particular, the Cyprus Government is providing scholarships for graduate and postgraduate programmes, especially in the fields of tourism, management, forestry and nursing, where we have comparative advantages and experience. We have also participated in election-monitoring in some African countries.

We pledge our continued support to the efforts of the international community, in solidarity with Africa, to strengthen peace, cooperation and development in the continent. In conclusion, we underline the need to act upon the Secretary-General's report as soon as possible.

The President: I thank the representative of Cyprus for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Uganda. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Semakula Kiwanuka (Uganda): The Uganda delegation joins previous speakers in congratulating you, Sir, on presiding over the proceedings of this meeting and on being the President of the Security Council for this month.

In the same spirit, we congratulate your predecessor, the Ambassador of Gambia, for the sterling work he did.

The Uganda delegation associates its statement with those made earlier by the Ambassador of Zimbabwe, on

behalf of the Organization of African Unity, and the Ambassador of Mauritania, on behalf of the African Group at the United Nations.

Uganda welcomes this opportunity and commends the Secretary-General for his concise and comprehensive report on Africa, entitled "The causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa". We also commend the manner in which the Secretary-General has carefully identified and weaved the linkages between peace, security and economic development. An understanding of this symbiotic relationship paves the way for the building of stability, durable peace and sustainable development.

The Secretary-General's report comes at a time when, in spite of enormous problems, positive change is under way in Africa. There is a new political leadership that is championing democracy, human rights and good governance. That leadership has championed economic reforms and the stabilization of Africa's currencies. Economic growth has more than tripled since 1990 in many African countries. All these positive changes point to a potential for a stable and democratic Africa.

The Uganda delegation wishes to address a few areas that are of crucial importance to the future development of Africa and for which Uganda welcomes the attention which the Secretary-General has paid to them.

I turn first to the causes of conflict. To build durable peace, it is imperative to address the root causes of conflict. Economies that do not grow cannot develop. Sustained economic growth is essential, therefore, for sustainable development. Without sustainable development, we cannot eradicate poverty; and yet, poverty is a war that Africa must fight and win. To win that war, we need policies that are multidimensional in the broad social development sector. Such policies should target women, the growing population of unemployed youth and the poor in general. Micro-finance should be channelled to those groups and into the informal sector. The Government of Uganda is vigorously addressing these problems through a wide variety of micro-credit projects for women and youth and through macroeconomic reforms, the liberalization of the economy, privatization and the control of inflation. For Uganda, these measures have ensured a steady economic growth, with rates averaging 6 per cent per year.

Concerning agriculture, the green revolution, which modernized agricultural production in Asia, has, unfortunately, bypassed Africa. To eradicate poverty, Africa must pay serious attention to the agricultural sector, which needs to be modernized through the application of appropriate technologies, credit to the farmers and the provision of rural infrastructures.

I wish now to address myself to industrial development. Apart from a few countries in the region, Africa has never undergone an industrial revolution. Thus, by remaining an exporter of raw materials, Africa cannot enter the global economy. Industrial development is a key element of sustainable economic growth. It creates jobs and expands employment and equity.

The Secretary-General's report pays great attention to democracy and good governance. Where democracy is absent; where gross abuses of human rights prevail; where there is a denial of basic freedoms; where there is an absence of the rule of law; where citizens are denied access to resources and are excluded from power, conflicts are inevitable. Democratization and the protection of human rights, as well as wide political participation, are essential benchmarks for the consolidation of lasting peace.

The Uganda delegation appreciates that African countries are at different levels of the democratization process and that experiences in governance will differ from country to country. Empowerment and broad participation in the political process have been achieved in Uganda through the decentralization of power from the centre and through periodic elections down to the village level. All these activities in good governance are nurturing a culture of constitutionalism and the rule of law.

As regards the debt burden, Africa's foreign debt of $328.9 billion is totally unsustainable and has crippled the region's efforts to build its economies. As the size of debt has escalated, so have the debt-service ratios to export earnings. Africa calls for a serious review of the debt burden to make it sustainable, with higher ceilings and longer periods. Indeed, the Secretary-General's recommendations can hardly be improved on. The Secretary-General has called upon the creditor nations to convert into grants all the remaining bilateral debt of the poorest African countries. He has called upon the creditors to clear the entire debt stock of the poorest African countries, as recommended by the Organization of African Unity.

I now turn to the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Debt Initiative. Uganda, as the first country to

benefit from this facility, welcomes the Initiative but suggests that there should be more money available and that the waiting period should be shortened.

The thrust of the Secretary-General's report is conflict resolution and peace-building. Uganda has experience in this area. If time had allowed, I would have shared Uganda's experience in a detailed manner with the distinguished delegates here present. Briefly, this has been Uganda's experience. To build lasting peace, there must be a clear understanding and identification of the complexity and diversity of the causes of conflicts. Successful peace-building measures must address all or most of the causes, and reconciliation in the case of Uganda has proved to be a major confidence-building factor.

Many African countries need sustained international assistance for post-conflict peace-building and for financing development. Africa needs partnerships to promote economic growth and development and private investment, and to expand its currently small manufacturing sector. Africa needs partnerships to expand its market size. For this reason, the Uganda delegation welcomed President Clinton's recent visit to Africa as an opportunity to convey to Africa that the United States of America desires, and Africa desires, a long-term partnership and mutual understanding to promote trade and investment.

Finally, Uganda thanks the Secretary-General for his great vision for Africa. We pledge our full cooperation in the implementation of that vision.

The President: I thank the representative of Uganda for the kind words he addressed to me and to my predecessor.

The next speaker is the representative of the Netherlands. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Ramaker (Netherlands): The Netherlands subscribes wholeheartedly to the statement of the European Union delivered earlier today by the British Presidency of the Union. Allow me therefore to make just a few additional comments.

The Netherlands warmly welcomes the Secretary-General's report on Africa. The report before us will remain a source of reference for a long time for the problems it is addressing. It is comprehensive, thoughtful, critical where necessary, and practical. It shows for the first time clearly how a reforming United Nations, a closely coordinating United Nations system, including the Bretton Woods institutions, hand in hand with civil society, the non-governmental organization world and the regional organizations and Governments in Africa in close cooperation can turn things around.

The report does not merely assess problems; it suggests innovative solutions and ways to contribute to durable peace and economic growth in Africa. Some recommendations are especially directed at the Security Council, and the Netherlands would hope that the Council will give them the attention they deserve. Other suggestions should be discussed in the relevant United Nations bodies, and still others by the Member States themselves at the national level. The Netherlands will not be found wanting in its active participation in further discussions on how best to put the Secretary-General's recommendations into effect.

The report notes that the United Nations early warning capabilities have been significantly improved over the past few years. But yes, indeed, early warning without early action remains an empty shell. The report is clearly based on lessons learned, not only on early warning and conflict prevention, but on conflict management, peacemaking and post-conflict peace-building. In doing so, the Secretary-General was so courageous as not to spare the United Nations and its institutions the critical scrutiny they should be given, as the United Nations has itself been an actor in many conflict situations. We should benefit from reviewing the successes and failures of these actions. On the basis of lessons learned, the Netherlands endorses in particular the report's calls for mediation efforts in conflict situations to start early and to have special envoys or special representatives appointed at an early stage.

The report notes that preventive deployment is a proactive response to the threat of conflict. The Netherlands feels that one of the lessons learned should be that conflicts tend to escalate quickly and policies developed in response may already be outdated by the time they can be implemented. In peacekeeping, perhaps even more than in other domains, it is of essential importance not to be overtaken by events. When the tragic events unfolded in the Great Lakes region in 1994 before the eyes of the world, the Netherlands pointed to the necessity that the United Nations be provided with the instruments to respond rapidly to emerging conflicts. In the years since, several initiatives have been launched to this effect, but none of those have, much to the regret of the Netherlands, materialized in a concrete military

capacity. This clearly shows that we still have a long way to go to meet this requirement, the principle of which remains as valid now as before. The Netherlands will continue to support all efforts aimed at further strengthening United Nations rapid deployment capabilities.

The Netherlands shares the Secretary-General's view that humanitarian assistance is of great importance at various stages of conflict. In fact, humanitarian assistance may serve prevention as it reduces the danger of conflicts emerging from emergency situations. Humanitarian assistance during an actual conflict is also essential in order to prevent the population from suffering from strife, and in the phase of post-conflict reconstruction as well, to help stabilize the situation and promote sustainable peace. Another lesson learned points to the enormous importance to be given to measures to prevent the parties to a conflict from using humanitarian aid flows as a weapon in their struggle.

The report notes that a lack of economic development in itself may constitute an important source of conflict. The Netherlands shares the Secretary-General's view that economic reform is needed in many parts of Africa. Indeed, African countries should strive to make foreign investment more attractive. On the other hand, unwanted consequences of economic reform should be kept in check. The Netherlands especially endorses the Secretary-General's appeal that while implementing economic reform programmes the position of the weakest sections of society should be given special attention and consideration. In fact, much of the development effort of the Netherlands is geared to that objective.

The Netherlands welcomes a critical examination of aid flows. The report cites the example of a huge portion of technical assistance to Africa being spent on foreign expertise. The Netherlands, as is well known, is strongly in favour of increasing the effectiveness of development assistance. We are convinced that assistance meant for Africa should be spent as much as possible in Africa. In fiscal year 1996 — we have no more recent figures available — the Netherlands devoted some $3 billion to development assistance, almost 30 per cent of which, or roughly $800 million, was used for projects and programmes for Africa. It is estimated that of this sum, substantially more than 50 per cent was spent in Africa itself.

The Netherlands welcomes the call by the Secretary-General to help reduce the debt burden for the poorest countries. This has been part of the Netherlands development policy for a long time. Over the period from 1991 to 1996, the Netherlands agreed on bilateral debt alleviation to a total of $648 million, constituting a significant contribution to debt redemption worldwide.

An important quality of the present report is that it not only looks at the past, but is forward-looking at the same time. Indeed, we share the report's guarded optimism. There are encouraging signs from Africa in areas which constitute vital preconditions for durable peace and development, for democratization, good governance and respect for human rights. For the first time in decades, African economies are reporting sometimes substantial real growth. Positive developments in Africa are seen to be gaining momentum. The Netherlands fully endorses the call of the Secretary-General to summon the political will to make a change and to use the momentum which is already under way. If the political will can be summoned, both by the international community and by Africa itself, a better future for Africa, for millions of people who desire to live in peace and to see their living conditions improving, is really within reach.

The President: The next speaker is the representative of Guyana. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Insanally (Guyana): Let me say first of all, Mr. President, how pleased we are to see you in the Chair — despite the very long day you have had today. I also say a word of welcome to our new Deputy Secretary-General, who has joined the Security Council for these deliberations, and a word of appreciation to the delegation of Gambia for its stewardship of the Council last month.

As a country which has always had close relations with sister States in Africa, Guyana felt compelled to participate in the Council's debate on the report which has been presented by the Secretary-General for consideration by the relevant organs and agencies of the United Nations. Our participation, I hasten to add, was not prompted by a belief that we have any advice to offer Africa on how it should manage its affairs, but rather by the sense of solidarity which we feel with its people. Coming as we do from a similar colonial past, we share many of their limitations and problems as well as their hopes and aspirations for a better life. These historical bonds led us over the years to our active role in the struggle for African independence. Now, with the liberation of the entire continent, we would wish to see

this political freedom not only preserved but fully matched by economic independence.

The report is to be welcomed as an attempt to highlight those issues that are critical to Africa's future development. Written as it is in the first person, it reflects the personal commitment of the Secretary-General, himself an African, to the cause of that continent's development. Equally reflective of his perceptions of the Africa dialectic were the remarks he offered on the launching of the report. He was careful to remind his audience that not all of Africa was in difficult throes and that conflict situations were fairly well defined. And indeed, it may be observed that several African countries now show encouraging prospects for economic development. The Secretary-General also publicly recognized Africa's capacity for dealing with most of its own problems, making it clear that the recommendations contained in the report were not intended to supplant, but rather, as he said, to complement, the continent's own efforts. We cannot but applaud these observations, since we believe that Africa's failure in the past to achieve progress has been due in large measure to the imposition of external perceptions and prescriptions which did not take account of the particularities of the continent's needs.

To its credit, this latest report of the Secretary-General does not pretend to offer facile solutions to the problems of African countries. Instead, it limits itself to a broad survey of today's realities and to a brief indication of those areas in which cooperation among Governments of the region, the international community and the United Nations can prove beneficial. Consequently, the report may thus be better seen as a framework for action rather than as an exhaustive compendium of definitive proposals.

To turn now to specific parts of the report, beginning with what may be called the political chapter, we find that the analysis of conflict situations and their causes is both comprehensive and perceptive. Some conflicts, particularly those in recent years, do indeed have their roots in age-old controversies and in ethnic divisions and rivalries. However, external factors have also undoubtedly contributed to the eruption of conflict in many places. Certainly, the major arms-producing countries have been responsible for the growing supply of weapons to fuel wars. In addition, as the Secretary-General said, early-warning systems and adequate peacekeeping and peace-building machinery are essential to reduce the threat and consequences of conflict. We agree with him entirely that greater emphasis must now be placed on preventive diplomacy.

Our own experience in the Latin American and Caribbean region has amply demonstrated that while the United Nations must retain primary responsibility for international peace and security, there are, as the Secretary-General suggests, benefits to be derived from cooperation between organizations within the ambit of their respective constitutions. I recall the Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity saying to this body that, for want of a nail, the horse in Rwanda died. I think that thereafter we learned the lesson of closer cooperation among our respective organizations. Stronger regional bodies that are closer to the local situation and are therefore better able to understand and respond to them can help stem the tide of conflict through the early initiation the procedures for peaceful settlement set out in Article 33 of the Charter.

However, while no one can deny the negative consequences which conflicts hold for African countries, it is fair to say, I believe, that the primary causes of political and social instability in the region lie in the weak economic and physical infrastructure which exists in most countries. The ravages left by colonialism are not easily remedied. To understand the phenomenon of African underdevelopment today, one has to read the classic analysis by Walter Rodney, a distinguished scholar and compatriot of mine, in his seminal work, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*. This book is indispensable to a full comprehension of the difficulties in which some African countries find themselves today.

Admittedly, it is not too helpful to dwell on the past when one's energies can be better applied to shaping the future. Very often, however, unless there is a true appreciation of the fundamental issues involved, there can be no guarantee of finding definitive and durable solutions to outstanding problems. For the seeds of democracy, good governance and human rights to germinate and grow in Africa, one must remove the detritus of colonialism and lay down structures that will be conducive to a new culture.

Compounding the disadvantage of a weak physical infrastructure is the serious debt overhang to which many have referred and which now plagues most African countries. The total debt, we are told, now stands at an astronomical $338 billion. How can we truly speak of development with that kind of burden? At the same time, official development assistance remains extremely limited, and with extremely low gross national product, more than half of the continent's population lives in conditions of dismal poverty. The eradication of poverty

peace, an early-warning capacity must be followed up by swift decision-making.

Using mandatory sanctions is a very useful instrument available to the Security Council which enables the United Nations to exert pressure without resorting to force. Nonetheless, the concern expressed at the negative repercussions on the most vulnerable sectors of the population should encourage us to find ways of transforming sanctions into a less indiscriminate instrument and, if possible, a better targeted one.

Despite the significant progress made recently in arms regulation and disarmament — I have in mind in particular the success of the Ottawa Treaty — a great deal remains to be done to make up for the absence of norms governing conventional weapons, in particular small arms and light arms. We note that in many armed conflicts in Africa where the United Nations is called in to play a role, the main and even sole weapon is precisely this type of arms, which is readily available in the marketplace and for which there is keen competition in exports. We welcome the reactivation of the international commission to investigate arms trafficking in Central Africa, and Belgium intends to contribute to its financing.

Virtually all internal conflicts in Africa have an influence on the stability and internal security of neighbouring countries. There is therefore a need for regional and subregional political cooperation.

Belgium has been paying special attention to stepping up the peacekeeping capacity of African countries. We are contributing to this effort through support in terms of material and logistical support, as well as through support for training peacekeeping forces. We contributed to equipping a Malawi company participating in United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda in 1994, to the deployment of OAU observers in Burundi in 1995 and to equipping a Burkina Faso battalion to strengthen ECOMOG's forces in Liberia in 1997. More recently we have taken part in training exercises in the context of the initiatives undertaken by France and the United States.

On the basis of our initial experiences, our Government will soon be drawing up an overall approach to assistance for peacekeeping efforts in Africa. This concept will demonstrate Belgium's determination to complement the efforts of the African countries, as opposed to replacing them. Further, we welcome the steps taken by the United Nations and the OAU to establish an appropriate multilateral framework for the exchange of information and for coordination.

In these days when humanitarian action is taking place in an increasingly complex, explosive and dangerous context, it is alarming to note that combatants deliberately target civilian populations, either to displace them by force, to terrorize them or make use of them. Similarly, major humanitarian missions have been jeopardized, blocked or manipulated following tactical or strategic calculations on the part of the warring factions. These deplorable practices very often confront the international community with difficult choices. Nonetheless, these practices should not stop the international community from making those who impede humanitarian action and who refuse to respect the essential norms of international humanitarian law face up to their responsibilities.

Like the Secretary-General, we are convinced that humanitarian action cannot replace political action. If we do not at the same time attack the root causes of conflicts, humanitarian assistance will only have a palliative effect.

The results of our cooperation with Africa show that foreign aid, interventions or pressure, however significant, cannot by themselves bring about sustainable development, good governance or the rule of law. More than ever, development in Africa is a long-term undertaking. Africa must itself establish models for democratic societies in which individuals can develop their potential and take part in the decisions that concern them, in which minorities are involved in decision-making and where there is a consensus-based form of democracy. Regimes in which corruption prevails over good governance, where human rights are violated, where democratization remains a dead letter or where there is complete reliance on foreign aid do not meet the conditions for lasting stability. Such regimes might well find international attention turning elsewhere.

The international community must, however, undertake to support actively the efforts of those African countries that have made a new beginning, or are preparing to do so. Development assistance should focus on those areas in which it will have the greatest impact and should seek to reduce the dependence of recipient countries. We fully associate ourselves with the efforts of the European Union, which, in particular through the Lomé process, assists developing countries to integrate

has therefore to be a primary focus of international efforts in support of Africa's development.

In such straitened circumstances one can understand that some African countries are hardly in a position to attract foreign investment, which, as we all know, flows mainly to countries deemed to be safe havens. As a consequence, many of these countries cannot take advantage of arrangements to provide them with preferential market access for their commodities, which are, in any case, in the process of disappearing. Not surprisingly, therefore, although Africa has almost 22 per cent of the world's population, the continent accounts for only 2 per cent of world trade. That, I think, is a very telling figure. It is to be hoped, as the Secretary-General says, that the special initiative already taken by the United Nations to promote African development, as well as the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF), will assist Africa, if implemented properly, to make some progress in the next decade. Of further encouragement, I should mention, are the steps taken by your own Government, Mr. President, the Government of Japan, and by the Government of the United States to offer incentives for the expansion of Africa's productive capacity. Such special programmes could conceivably offer African countries the opportunity for economic take-off.

In conclusion, let me echo the view that the report goes beyond Africa and may apply, *mutatis mutandis*, to other stricken regions of the world. Indeed, many of the diagnoses and recommendations which it proffers can be directed elsewhere. Developing countries everywhere, therefore, will watch with interest to see how this report will be implemented and we will do all in our power to ensure that its promises are fulfilled. For the success or failure of the measures which it presents will not be that of Africa alone. The failure or success will be that of us all.

The President: I thank the representative of Guyana for his kind words addressed to me and my predecessor.

The next speaker is the representative of Belgium. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Wouters (Belgium) (*interpretation from French*): We have read with keen interest the Secretary-General's report on Africa. The analysis of the in-depth causes of African conflicts and the formulation of a series of recommendations have today given rise to an open and helpful debate. We hope that the interest shown in the course of this debate will be followed by concrete actions from all actors identified in the report. This report cannot be seen as an end in itself. It is rather an instrument that should guide us in our action. Our efforts must be sustained and should apply in other appropriate forums and be part of a long-term programme. Failing this, however commendable this good report is, it will remain just another document.

The report strikes a subtle balance between the responsibilities of the various parties in the past and at present. My delegation wishes to highlight the importance of an overall approach that would no way undermine this balance. Partial implementation of these recommendations would give rise only to a partial solution to the many problems that have given rise to conflicts and impeded sustainable development in Africa.

On the basis of a frank and honest analysis of the past, with its successes and failures, the Secretary-General has presented a vision for the future. Belgium, for its part, has not hesitated to face up to the past, draw the necessary lessons and determine a new approach in policy of partnership and cooperation. In 1995, the Government of Belgium drew up an agenda for a new dialogue and new cooperation with Africa. More recently, it carried out an overall assessment of its peacekeeping policy following the 1994 events in Rwanda, and certain conclusions have been drawn as a result.

In order to develop a global strategy for the future, one cannot merely analyse the past. I would therefore take this opportunity to highlight those recommendations in the Secretary-General's report that deserve special mention, without doing an injustice to the rest of this excellent report.

All organized societies are based on assurance that their members will settle their differences without turning to violence. Unfortunately, one cannot always rely on the peaceful settlement of disputes. Consequently, the priority goal of the Untied Nations must continue to be that of providing instruments that would stem and resolve conflicts while attacking their root causes. In this context, cooperation with regional organizations opens up great prospects. The recent close ties established between the secretariats of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the United Nations are a good example, in particular in improving the mechanism for monitoring and detecting threats to peace and security. However, in order to transform the rhetoric of prevention into the reality of

themselves into the world economy. We also support efforts to assist Africa in escaping the debt trap.

In conclusion I would like to express my country's fervent wish that the report of the Secretary-General would contribute to mobilizing the political will required from all sides. For its part, Belgium is prepared to continue to assume its responsibility in Africa. We will be active in those areas in which, in collaboration with our African partners, we will be able to achieve progress and open the path to development.

The President: The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of the United Arab Emirates. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Samhan Al-Nuaimi (United Arab Emirates) (*interpretation from Arabic*): On behalf of the delegation of the United Arab Emirates, I am honoured to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month. I wish you every success. By the same token I would like to thank your predecessor, the Permanent Representative of the Gambia, for his fine work in conducting the deliberations of the Council during the past month.

My delegation carefully studied the report of the Secretary-General on Africa. It clearly reflects an objective and comprehensive analysis of the current situation in this continent. Although there have been positive developments in some political and economic spheres over the course of the past decade, these improvements have yet to affect many areas of Africa. These areas are still threatened with regional, ethnic and civil conflicts.

Past experiences have proven that issues of peace, security and stability and problems of social and economic development are interdependent and complementary concerns. They are mutually reinforcing. Consequently, increasing or containing any of them cannot be achieved without influencing the others. The series of bitter conflicts and tragedies that some African States have witnessed are saddening manifestations of this reality, which has caused staggering material, human and environmental losses which in turn have worsened complex situations and impeded the processes of integration into global economic development and changes.

The delegation of the United Arab Emirates supports the conclusions and proposals in the report of the Secretary-General, since they constitute new modes of thinking and means of enhancing activities in Africa whether in the fields of peacekeeping or of humanitarian assistance and post-conflict peace-building. Yet at the same time we see the necessity of mobilizing regional and international capacities aiming at enhancing Africa's resources and human capabilities so as to enable Africa to undertake required reforms and to play its roles effectively in the global economy and trade as a significant component of international cooperation.

This, in our view, requires the adoption of five basic steps.

First, the African States and the international community need to manifest the political will to implement a joint comprehensive strategy that ensures the containment of existing conflicts through peaceful means of negotiation in accordance with the principles of the Charter, the provisions of international law and the international rules of human rights.

Secondly, there should be a rapid political response to contain conflicts, taking into account the elements peculiar to each individual situation through the adoption of more developed early-warning mechanisms. This would help maintain peace and prevent crises from breaking out by sending more effective peacemaking missions, promoting initiatives for negotiation, mediation, good offices and fact-finding missions and resorting to legal settlements and arbitration in cases of intractable conflicts.

Thirdly, cooperation and coordination between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity, as well as other relevant organizations, should be enhanced. This would be in addition to the expansion of the participation of and partnership among States that are contiguous to areas of conflict and other States which are interested in containing such situations peacefully and contributing to implementing relief and reconstruction programmes, as well as to rebuilding the infrastructures of institutions that have been destroyed. The capacities and freedom of action of the international and humanitarian agencies and organizations, which perform a distinctive role in achieving these noble goals, must be supported.

Fourthly, the working methods and procedures of the Security Council should be reviewed. Double standards should be avoided, particularly with regard to the use of sanctions regimes, whose objectives must be improved in accordance with what the Secretary-General

has indicated in his report. Sanctions should be confined to weapons only and should not include economic sanctions, which have proven their inefficiency and their adverse impact on people's lives. The United Arab Emirates would like to take this opportunity to urge the Security Council to lift the economic sanctions imposed on Libya. This is particularly important given the two decisions taken by the International Court of Justice.

Fifthly, joint development investment programmes and financial and technical assistance to Africa should be enhanced, whether they come from States acting unilaterally, from the World Bank, or from other financial and economic institutions and funds. This would enable countries to implement necessary reforms and changes in their economic and social institutions and deal with their heavy foreign debts and help them gain access to world markets as real partners in achieving the goals of international development.

The United Arab Emirates has been keen to develop its relations with African States on the basis of our historical and political relations as well as of our joint interests and goals. Through the directives of His Highness Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al-Nahyan, the President of the State, we, in our general policies, are paying particular attention to providing assistance and various forms of support to African States, whether humanitarian, through the humanitarian Zayed Institution, the Red Crescent or other organizations; or developmental, thorough the Abu Dhabi development fund. The latter has contributed to the implementation of many joint development projects and concessional funds, which exceeded $3 billion. Similarly, we are writing off debts and the interest on them for a number of African States, particularly the poorest.

In conclusion, we call for activating the role of the United Nations and its organs and specialized agencies, in addition to that of the international development institutions, in cooperation with the African States so as to help such States solve their existing political, economic and social problems. This would enable them to meet the requirements of decent standards of living and prosperity for their people and enable them to build a future in which peace, stability and development can prevail.

The President: I thank the representative of the United Arab Emirates for the kind words he addressed to me and to my predecessor.

The next speaker is the representative of the Comoros. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Mahmoud (Comoros) (*interpretation from French*): I take great pleasure in seeing you, Sir, presiding over the work of the Council for the month of April. I should also like to take this opportunity to congratulate your predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Sallah, for his strong and effective leadership of the work of the Security Council for the month of March. My delegation aligns itself with the statement made by Ambassador Mapuranga of Zimbabwe in his capacity as the current Chairman of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), as well as that made by Ambassador Ould Deddach of Mauritania in his capacity as Chairman of the African Group for the month of April.

We are meeting once again to debate the prevailing situation of conflict in Africa. As the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, reminds us in his report entitled "The causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa", the resolution of problems that continue to afflict a large part of the African continent must take place in a voluntarist political framework whose first task would be to introduce the basic elements necessary for development. Such elements would include a legal authority endowed with the means necessary to carry out its functions, and, more broadly, a responsible State whose first task would be to introduce the elements necessary for ensuring that the country achieved its economic and political potential. We believe that these are the elements that must be stressed if a successful transformation of our societies is to be achieved.

We fully subscribe to the ideas of the Secretary-General, and we again assure him of our commitment to support the steps that he takes in this direction. Similarly, the Government of the Comoros congratulates and encourages the OAU for establishing its Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution. Like many Member States, we welcome the various signs of progress and economic recovery that the African continent has shown recently. The Afro-pessimism of the 1980s is gradually yielding to measured yet real optimism. Many countries have committed themselves to stabilizing their public finances, and various ambitious national programmes have been implemented with performance and competitiveness as a common yardstick.

Africa has come a long way, but a great deal still remains to be done. Indeed, if a country is to prosper and enjoy any level of economic development, if a State is to play its role as a guarantor of freedoms, the institutions of the State must be able to function effectively.

For this reason, His Excellency Mohamed Taki Abdulkarim, President of the Islamic Federal Republic of the Comoros, has committed himself to modernizing the economy of the Comoros. To this end, measures have been taken with respect to the Government's rate of expenditure and to private sectors, where various initiatives are designed to breathe new energy into the spirit of entrepreneurship. The necessary reform of the public sector began with an inventory of public goods, an auditing of resources and an examination of individual accounts to track down abuses committed during the years of administrative negligence and misappropriation which marked the previous regimes.

Various development plans, including those of foreign investors, have been studied, for the Comoros needs, *inter alia*, large-scale international support that would allow the State institutions to function effectively. In this context, the Government of the Comoros would ask all of you to support the Islamic Federal Republic of the Comoros vis-à-vis the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund regarding the adoption of a budgetary aid programme on its behalf, and also to advocate greater flexibility in the measures related to the structural adjustment plans that have been drawn up for the country.

As we said earlier, a great deal of work remains ahead of us. Nevertheless, we are confident of our capacity to take advantage of our natural wealth. The Comoros islands have a wonderful coastline and a landscape free of all industrial devastation, whose beauty has often been praised. Despite these assets, we have real grounds for concern.

Since its independence in 1975, my country has unfortunately been rocked by a series of raids carried out by European mercenaries. You will undoubtedly recall the dramatic events of September 1995, when Comoros was invaded by international mercenaries, which caused major economic and social trauma. The people of Comoros have suffered from many attempts at destabilization that have been fostered abroad. The Government of the Comoros calls on the Secretary-General to encourage the Member States of our Organization to ratify the International Convention against the Recruitment, Use, Financing and Training of Mercenaries, adopted by the General Assembly in resolution 44/34 of 4 December 1989.

There is no need for me to recall that for a year now, separatist ideas have been emerging among the Comorian population, particularly in the island of Anjouan, which has been clamouring for a return to French trusteeship. The tragic events which have occurred in the Comoros in the past few months resulted from the unprecedented socio-economic crisis that has so seriously afflicted my country. Certainly, the incomplete independence of the Comoros is also an element that should not be overlooked. The impact of this economic and political instability has undoubtedly forced the people of Anjouan to revolt against the Comoros Government. Nonetheless, such a movement could not endure without external support.

It is high time that action be taken to ensure that such outdated acts cease to occur anywhere in the world. In a statement of 1 August 1997, Mohamed Taki Abdulkarim recalled that the Comoros archipelago was recognized by the international community in General Assembly resolution 3385 (XXX) of 12 November 1975 as an independent country comprised of four islands: Grande-Comore, Anjouan, Mohéli and Mayotte.

Decades after the adoption of this resolution, the question of the Comorian island of Mayotte still appears on our Organization's agenda. In a spirit of openness and dialogue, the Government of the Comoros has made several proposals seeking to resolve this dispute in an atmosphere of calm and national unity. I will take this opportunity to reiterate, on behalf of the people of the Comoros, our deepest gratitude to the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and its Secretary-General, His Excellency Salim Ahmed Salim, as well as to the League of Arab States and all the friendly countries for the decisive role they are playing in the resolution of the conflicts in my country.

In this distinguished forum, I would like to make a solemn appeal to the international community, and in particular to the members of the Security Council, to assist us in solving the problem of the dismemberment of the Islamic Federal Republic of the Comoros and to help the archipelago of the Comoros to enter the twenty-first century as a reunited country.

You, Sir, would undoubtedly agree with me that, as human beings, the Comoran people have the right to

peace, security, health, education and hope for a better future.

The President: I thank the representative of the Comoros for his kind words addressed to me and to my predecessor.

The next speaker is the representative of Cameroon. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Belinga Eboutou (Cameroon) (*interpretation from French*): First of all, I should like to say how pleased we are to see you, Sir, presiding over the work of the Security Council in the month of April and over the present discussion on Africa. You represent a country whose commitment to peace and development in Africa is demonstrated anew each day. The first Tokyo International Conference on African Development, and soon the Second, are witness to that. We feel sure that under your guidance the Council will give a new impetus to the relationship between the United Nations and Africa. I would also pay tribute to the positive actions of your predecessor, Ambassador Sallah of the Gambia. Finally, I would like to thank you for allowing me to speak here before this assembly on the occasion of this debate, which is important on two grounds.

It is important, first of all, because it deals with international peace and security and the development of Africa.

It is equally important for the United Nations, and more specifically for the Security Council. The international community's reluctance in the last few years to take the appropriate financial and political risks in order to deploy peacekeeping operations and to ensure development in Africa was already giving rise to a number of questions. A feeling of marginalization was developing here and there, and even of abandonment of a continent presumably doomed only to war, disease and poverty. The present debate thus comes at a good time, so that this Organization and the Security Council can regain credibility among the people of Africa — particularly the Security Council, which has done so much in the past for the liberation of our continent.

We would also take this opportunity to congratulate the Secretary-General for his courageous report. The document does indeed describe the true state of Africa; it is an in-depth and detailed study of the causes of conflicts in various parts of our continent and of the elements that could provide possible solutions.

We are also pleased that he has drawn the attention of the Security Council to the current economic situation in Africa, which will become a threat to international peace and security if it is not dealt with. As the Security Council recognized in its presidential statement when it met at the level of Heads of State and Government on 31 January 1992,

> "The absence of war and military conflicts amongst States does not in itself ensure international peace and security. The non-military sources of instability in the economic, social, humanitarian and ecological fields have become threats to peace and security." [*S/23500, eleventh paragraph*]

On the question of conflicts, Cameroon fully endorses the recommendations of the Secretary-General on preventive diplomacy and the restoration and maintenance of peace. Priority should be given to preventive diplomacy, which has three tasks: to detect as soon as possible situations that may give rise to conflicts and put an end to them before violence emerges; to ease tensions before they lead to conflicts; and to act quickly where conflict has already broken out in order to contain it and eliminate its underlying causes.

Action to maintain peace and prevent the thundering of guns cannot be delayed under any circumstances. That is the vital duty of the Security Council: to prevent the thunder of guns. Here we should commend and thank the Secretary-General for the initiatives he has taken with respect to conflicts in some African countries, by deploying missions of investigation, mediation and good offices and by sending special representatives. In this connection, the recent establishment of the Executive Committee on Peace and Security under the authority of the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs should be lauded.

Cameroon, which has made peace the main pillar of its policy within and beyond its borders, expects the United Nations, and the Security Council in particular, to implement preventive diplomacy with determination, in order to keep disputes between States from degenerating into armed conflicts and to shift potential conflicts from the battlefield to a forum of peaceful resolution.

As a member of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central

Africa and as a signatory of the Non-Aggression Pact between the States of Central Africa of July 1996, Cameroon is concerned about the proliferation of illegal weapons in Africa. The statistics in this regard are clear and particularly enlightening. At the end of the cold war the arms industry converted to the production of light weapons. The blame for the proliferation of illegal arms in Africa belongs to the operators of the black market. They sell those weapons at such low prices that they are now available to the ordinary citizen. We can see the gravity of such a situation.

That is why Cameroon endorses the Secretary-General's proposal to compile and publish a list of the names of these merchants of arms and death in order to permit the international community to take concerted action to put a decisive end to their illegal and deadly activities.

Peace and development are intrinsically linked. Development is even the new name for peace, but there can be no sustainable development without lasting peace and no lasting peace without sustainable development. We have come to realize that these elements are interdependent and that there can be no real progress without the advancement of these elements.

The lack of development can become a threat to international prosperity, peace and security. As the means of communication continue to develop, the distance between different parts of the world shrinks. In the twenty-first century we will not be able to content ourselves with having little islands of prosperity and opulence amid an ocean of suffering and misery. This means that Africa's current economic backwardness remains a major challenge to us, a challenge that we can, and must, face together. The stability of the world and our very survival depend upon it.

The Secretary-General has done well to identify the causes of this situation: the drop in official development assistance, the excessive debt burden, the reduction in investment and tariff barriers that block the access of our products to international markets. The Secretary-General has also done well to suggest some solutions to these ills.

We support his recommendation that the international financial institutions review the conditions imposed on countries in crisis or that have just emerged from crisis, in order not to compromise the peace process through measures that are too rigorous. We think that it is necessary to go even further and to ask financial institutions to do this for all African countries.

Of course, it is not the role of the Security Council to finance development, but, since development is linked to peace, the Council could call on the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the international financial institutions to take up the report of the Secretary-General and, in addition, to concern themselves more with the economic situation in Africa on a priority basis.

The President: I thank the representative of Cameroon for his kind words addressed to me and to my predecessor.

There are no further speakers inscribed on my list. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 10.20 p.m.